

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

Chris Rock rolls into Oscars with confidence

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Female GI demoted over mud-wrestling incident in Iraq

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1st ID steps up patrols in Iraq as tour nears end

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Sgt. Michael Robin, left, with an Iraqi soldier

Volume 2, No.302 © SS 2005 MIDEAST EDITION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005



THE 2006 DEFENSE BUDGET PROPOSAL



Army plan focuses on force protection in '06

\$244M for more up-armored Humvees, heavy-chassis vehicles

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A truly Super dynasty

Patriots have place in history after third title in four years

Coverage on Back page, Pages 26-29



AP photos

Left: Patriots fans reach to touch the Vince Lombardi Trophy after New England beat the Philadelphia Eagles, 24-21, in Super Bowl XXXIX in Jacksonville, Fla., on Sunday. Right: Patriots strong safety Rodney Harrison (37) celebrates his interception with Asante Samuel (22) late in the fourth quarter to seal the Patriots' victory over the Eagles.

Soldiers in Iraq hoped for Britney, beers during Super Bowl Page 4

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STARS AND STRIPES
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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Togo's new president: Togo's constitutional court swore in 39-year-old Faure Gnassingbe as this tiny West African nation's new president on Monday, despite volleys of international condemnation after the military installed him as his late father's successor.

The six-member court conducted the ceremony at the presidential palace, where Gnassingbe raised his right hand to swear the oath.

Gnassingbe comes to power in a tiny, impoverished country with little experience of rule of law. His father, Gnassingbe Eyadema, had held onto power longer than any other modern African leader through force, patronage and the loyalty of his Kabyle ethnic group and his Togo People's Rally party.

Ailing pope: Pope John Paul II will remain hospitalized a few more days as a precaution, the Vatican said Monday, a day after the 84-year-old pope appeared at his clinic window to show the world he was recovering from his latest health crisis.

Papal spokesman Joaquín Navarro-Valls said the pope, who he said was continuing to improve, had no fever, was eating regularly and has been sitting in a chair every day for several hours.

"His doctors have advised him to stay a few more days," Navarro-Valls said, declining to set a date for the pope's release.

"I cannot be precise about how many days more" in the hospital, he said. "But the doctors have suggested several more days."

Georgian prime minister's death: The FBI is sending a team of experts to look into last week's death of Georgia's premier and a car bombing that killed three policemen days earlier, the U.S. ambassador said Monday.

The death Thursday of Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania, which officials say appears to have come from carbon-monoxide poisoning, and the car bombing in Gori two days earlier left many Georgians feeling unsettled and some suggested there may have been a link between the events.

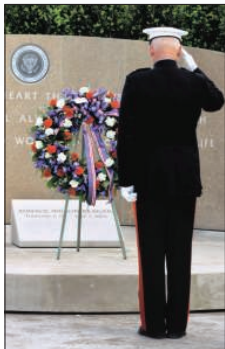
Zhvania was leading efforts to work out a negotiated settlement on South Ossetia, a region that has been de-facto independent since the end of a separatist conflict a decade ago. Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili has vowed to restore control of South Ossetia and another separatist region, Abkhazia.

Dutch terror network: Prosecutors opened their case Monday against 12 men accused of belonging to a terror network suspected in the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh and plots to attack prominent Dutch politicians.

The defendants, mostly young Muslims of North African ancestry, were arrested within days of van Gogh's death on Nov. 2 — a killing that shocked the nation and triggered retaliatory attacks on Islamic sites.

Van Gogh, a distant relative of painter Vincent van Gogh, was shot and stabbed on a busy Amsterdam, Netherlands, street. The killer cut his throat and, in a note pinned to the filmmaker's chest with a knife, threatened further attacks in the name of radical Islam.

1998 Omagh bombing: Ireland's anti-terrorist court ruled Monday it could not help survivors of the 1998 Omagh bomb — the deadliest terrorist attack in Northern Ireland history — who are suing five promi-



Reagan's birthday: Maj. Gen. Timothy Donovan, commanding officer of the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton, Calif., salutes after he and others placed a wreath, sent by President Bush, at the grave of former president Ronald Reagan. Ceremonies were held Sunday on what would have been Reagan's 94th birthday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif. Former Gov. Pete Wilson also was on hand at the celebration conducted by Camp Pendleton Marines. The Marines then honored the nation's 40th chief executive with a 21-gun salute.

Irish Republican Army dissidents. The three judges of the Special Criminal Court ruled it would be illegal to provide transcripts or any other material related to the court's handling of cases against four of the five men.

Plane crash in Afghanistan: NATO troops scouring the wreckage of an Afghan airliner atop a snowy mountain peak on Monday found human remains amid the debris but no sign that any of the 104 people on board survived the crash, a spokesman said.

Relatives swarmed toward the freezing mountain to try to retrieve the bodies, but they were turned back by Afghan security forces struggling to mount a recovery operation.

Clear skies allowed a Spanish Cougar helicopter to drop five Slovenian mountain troops onto the mountain top 20 miles east of Kabul, on Monday morning, where they struggled through the deep snow among several pieces of torn fuselage.

Red Brigades trial: Five suspected members of the Red Brigades terrorist group went on trial Monday for their alleged roles in the 2002 killing of a labor consultant.

Marco Biagi, who was advising the Italian government on bitterly contested labor reforms, was shot to death near his home in Naples in 2002. Days later, the Red Brigades-Combatant Communist Party claimed responsibility.

The group is an offshoot of the radical leftist organization that terrorized Italy in the 1970s and 1980s.

Disgraced Pakistani nuclear scientist: Pakistan on Monday rejected a report that an international black market in weapons technology, run by disgraced Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan, may have sold equipment to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries.

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed described as "baseless" the allegations printed in this week's edition of Time magazine, but he did not rule out Khan could have sold technology to more countries than initially thought.

Paris airport terminal collapses: A government-appointed board of inquiry investigating the partial collapse of a Paris airport terminal found serious errors in construction, including concrete that had not been sufficiently reinforced, a newspaper reported Monday.

But the government's Transport Ministry said the inquiry and its report were not completed and indicated the conclusions published by the daily Le Parisien were "totally premature."

The newspaper said that after nine months of work, the inquiry commission found "several serious errors in the conception" of the futuristic Terminal 2E at Charles de Gaulle airport.

States

Smuggling deaths trial: Jury selection in the trial of a New York man accused of taking part in a smuggling attempt that resulted in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants was again delayed Monday.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals granted a request by prosecutors to put the trial on hold while it decides whether to overturn a judge's ruling to have two juries decide the fate of Tyrone Williams.

A trial in the nation's deadliest smuggling attempt was put on hold last month after Williams' attorneys asked the U.S. Supreme Court to make public details about why he is the only one of 14 indicted defendants in the case who faces the death penalty.

BTk investigation: The BTK serial killer investigation is being used as a teaching tool in college criminal justice courses around the country.

The killer known as BTK — which stands for "Bind, Torture, Kill" — has been linked to eight unsolved killings in Wichita, Kan., from 1974 through 1986. BTK resurfaced last March with letters to Wichita media and police.

"It's a very compelling case," said Volkan Topalli, an assistant professor in the criminal justice department at Georgia State University in Atlanta. "There's a lot of material to work with."

Michael Jackson trial: Jury selection in the Michael Jackson molestation case has been delayed, but media efforts to learn more about who might eventually sit in judgment of the entertainer are moving ahead.

Attorneys for news organizations were to ask Judge Barbara Courie (Calif.) Superior Court Judge Rodney S. Melville on Monday to allow reporters to view completed questionnaires filled out last week by 250 prospective jurors.

"It's really vital for the public to be able to have access to the questionnaires while the selection process is occurring ... to serve as a check on the process," said media lawyer Theodore Rodney S. Melville on Monday. Associated Press and other news organizations.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Correction

A story in Monday's edition mistated the location of a NASA Goddard Space Flight Center facility. The facility mentioned in the story is in Virginia.

Comics, advice and
horoscope every day
in Stars and Stripes



Residents look through the windows of a van destroyed during an overnight patrol by American and Iraqi soldiers in the Sadr City area of western Baghdad on Monday. According to eyewitnesses, an Iraqi man was shot by U.S. or Iraqi forces during the incident.

Attacks on police station, hospital kill at least 30

BY MARIAM FAM
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents struck at Iraqi police with a suicide bomb, a car bomb and mortars in the cities of Mosul and Baquba on Monday, killing at least 30 people as they pressed their campaign to undermine the fledgling security forces.

The deadliest attack came in Baquba, where a car bomb exploded outside the gates of a provincial police headquarters, killing 15 people and wounding 17, police Col. Mudhahar al-Jubouri said. Many victims were there to seek jobs as policemen, al-Jubouri said. The bomb went off outside the hospital building, hospital Director Tahseen Ali Mahmoud al-Obeidi said. Witnesses said the bomber called the police officers over to him and then blew up among the crowd.

"I heard an explosion. When I went to check, I saw bodies everywhere," al-Obeidi said. The ground was soaked with blood. Nurses collected body parts, putting them in bags.

In a posting on a Web site, the al-Qaida in Iraq group, led by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, said "a lion from the Martyrs Brigade" wearing an explosives belt managed to get inside a police post at the Mosul hospital. The claim could not be verified.

There was no claim for the Baquba attack.

Also Monday, U.S. troops manning a checkpoint found four Egyptian technicians who had been kidnapped the previous day in Baghdad, freeing them and arresting some of the abductors, an Egyptian diplomat said.

"It's the Americans who freed them," Feroq Mabrouk, head of the Egyptian mission, told The Associated Press. "They were released and they will come to the embassy."

He said the Americans had "made some arrests" but gave no further information.

Also Monday, insurgents shelled a police station in Mosul with more than a dozen mortar rounds, killing three civilians, a police official said.

Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city, has seen daily insurgent attacks and rebel clashes with U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces.

The attacks were the latest sign that insurgents

are stepping up attacks against Iraq's security forces, which the United States hopes can assume a greater role in fighting the rebels once a newly elected government takes office.

The violence and kidnappings raise new concerns about security following a brief downturn in violence after the Jan. 30 elections, when Iraqis chose a new National Assembly in the first nationwide balloting since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003.

A final tally was expected by Thursday, but initial returns point to a landslide by Shiite Muslim candidates endorsed by their clerics. Shiites are believed to comprise about 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people.

In Sweden, the Foreign Ministry said Monday that it was investigating reports that a Swedish citizen of Iraqi origin was kidnapped last month.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Anna Arvidson confirmed that a Swedish citizen in his 60s had been reported missing in Iraq and that Sweden's embassy in Amman, Jordan, was investigating the case.

"He is a Swedish citizen and has been living in Iraq for a couple of years," Arvidson said. The missing man was identified by newspapers as Minas Ibrahim al-Yousfi, the purported leader of the Christian Democratic Party in Iraq. The Foreign Ministry refused to identify the missing man.

Meanwhile, an Italian journalist who was kidnapped Friday will be released in the next few days, according to an Internet statement released in the name of the Iraqi judicial group holding her on Monday.

"After the judicial committee of the Jihad Organization interrogated the Italian captive Giuliana Sgreia, it has been found that the Italian captive is not involved in spying for the infidels in Iraq," the group said in a statement posted on a Web site that frequently carries messages from Islamic militants.

On Sunday, the U.S. command denied a report by an Iraqi police captain that 22 Iraqi security troops and 14 insurgents were killed Sunday night when rebels tried to storm a police station in a village south of Baghdad.

In a telephone interview with The Associated Press on Sunday, Capt. Muthana Khalid Ali of the Babil provincial police command had said the attack occurred in Al-Bu Mustafa village, in the Mahawil district, about 50 miles south of Baghdad. However, U.S. command spokeswoman Capt. Patricia Brewer said no attack occurred, citing provincial authorities. Capt. Ali later said he had misread the initial report.

Army forgives debts of wounded soldiers

129 mistakenly charged expenses

BY LIZ SIDOTI

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Army has identified 129 wounded soldiers who mistakenly received bills for expenses upon returning home from wars — in some cases instead of final paychecks — and it has forgiven their debts.

After learning of the first such cases, Army Gen. Richard A. Cody said, an audit team determined that other wounded soldiers "experienced pay issues" and the Army has made changes it hopes will prevent other instances.

"We are dedicated to the well being of our soldiers and strive to provide the absolute best for America's sons and daughters," Cody, the Army's vice chief of staff, said in a letter sent late Friday to Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The Democrat from New York intervened in the case of Spc. Robert Loria, who lost his arm in Iraq. In December, as Loria was about to be discharged from the Army, officials told the

27-year-old soldier from Middletown, N.Y., that he owed nearly \$1,800 in expenses.

Loria, who was wounded last February, had expected to get a check for nearly \$4,500.

Clinton and other members of the New York delegation claimed that the Army's estimate of expenses owed was too large and based in part on paperwork errors and bureaucratic complications. The Army ultimately forgave Loria's debt.

But after Clinton's office received other similar complaints, she sent a letter to the Army on Jan. 19 asking what procedures were in place to avoid similar cases. She said the complaints she had heard "suggest serious systemic problems."

In his response, Cody said Army medical and financial officials now meet individually with wounded soldiers to ensure they are aware of any entitlements they are owed. And, he said, the Army has established financial support teams at hospitals for wounded soldiers to swiftly take care of any such problems.

Voting problems emerge

BY MARIAM FAM

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Some polling stations were shuttered.

Others ran out of ballots. A provincial governor's office was left off the list of candidates. And some minorities complain it is all a plot to silence them.

One week after Iraq's historic election, allegations of confusion, mismanagement or worse are surfacing, complicating the vote count and perhaps providing ammunition for politicians to question the process. They say they do not face well in the final tally.

It is too early to tell if the criticism can undermine the legitimacy of the incoming National Assembly. But in some local races, fears are already strong that flawed elections will give rise to

provincial councils with skewed demographic representation.

The most serious allegations are concentrated in violence-plagued areas or those with mixed religious and ethnic groups. Failure to reconcile disarray over the Jan. 30 vote could worsen local tensions.

Iraq's election commission says it has received more than 100 complaints of irregularities. It has formed an independent team of three lawyers to investigate, though election officials have sought to downplay the scope and seriousness of the problems.

"There are political parties that have contested the legitimacy of the election process even before the voting started," election official Adel al-Lami said. "It's because they know they won't get many votes."

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Sunday, at least 1,448 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,105 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is six higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Neth-

erlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,310 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 996 deaths resulting from hostilities, according to the military's numbers.

■ The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A soldier was killed Sunday in a roadside bombing north of Baghdad.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

Rumsfeld: Iraq will shape its government

By DOUGLASS K. DANIEL
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Once its internal security forces are trained to handle violent insurgents, Iraq will require more time to build a military force strong enough to meet any threats from Iran or other neighbors, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld says.

Rumsfeld, appearing on Sunday talk shows, said Iraq will shape its own government and will reflect its political and social demands in that system, not those of the United States.

Rumsfeld said he doubts Iraq will choose a theocratic system mirroring that of Iran, a choice he said would be "a terrible mistake."

Rumsfeld said he doesn't believe President Bush's State of the Union declaration that U.S. troops will leave Iraq when the country "is democratic, representative of all its people, at peace with its neighbors, and able to defend itself" means American forces will be there for years to come.

"What he meant was that the Iraqis' internal security forces would be capable of

Case closed on general's comments

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Sunday he considers the case closed to a Marine Corps general told to watch his words after comments about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The officer said, "It's fun to shoot some people," and poked fun at the manhood of Afghans as he described the wars U.S. troops are fighting.

Lt. Gen. James Mattis, a career infantry officer who is now in charge of devel-

oping better ways to train and equip Marines, made the comments Tuesday while speaking to a forum in San Diego.

His boss, Gen. Mike Hagee, commander of the Marine Corps, said on Thursday that the comments reflected "the unfortunate and harsh realities of war" but that Mattis has been asked to watch his words in public.

Rumsfeld, asked Sunday about the matter, said: "The commandant of the Marine Corps said that he was concerned about the words, and he counseled with that individual, and as far as I can see, the matter is closed."

managing the security situation inside the country," Rumsfeld told ABC's "This Week."

"It will take some time after that before they would have the kind of capability to dissuade Iraq, for example, if Iran decided to try to conduct a war with them again."

Speaking of the future Iraqi government

on NBC's "Meet the Press," Rumsfeld said: "I think it would just be an enormous mistake for that country to think that it could succeed with all of its opportunity — with its oil, its water, its intelligent population — to deny half of their population, women, to participate fully. I think just would be a terrible mistake."

Rumsfeld said no one can know how long it will take to train various forces to secure Iraq internally, dismissing analysts' predictions of at least two years. One of several factors, he told ABC, is the behavior of Iran and Syria and "the extent to which they're going to be unhelpful or helpful."

Syria has not done all it can to ease the insurgency in Iraq, Rumsfeld said, nor has it released millions of dollars in Iraqi assets. "There is no doubt that the Baathists are located in Syria, from Iraq," the secretary told CNN's "Late Edition."

"Syria has not been helpful" — nor, he added on CBS' "Face the Nation," has been Iran.

On related topics, Rumsfeld:

■ Ruled out the possibility of reviving the military draft. "We don't need one. We have the ability to attract and retain the people we need in the military."

■ Said that in twice offering to resign at the height of the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal last year, he still could be an effective Pentagon chief but wanted Bush to make that call. "I told him I really thought he ought to consider it. But he made a conscious decision, and life goes on, and here we are."

McCartney just doesn't do it for Super Bowl fans in Iraq

Sleep-deprived GIs want more Britney, beer and wings — but Pats' win A-OK

By TERRY BOYD

Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING

BASE WILSON, Iraq

pc. Jones, take a letter.

Re: To The National Football League

From: Young American soldiers in the desert

Re: The Super Bowl XXXIX halftime show

Take all that that Super Bowl ad money and buy a clue.

"Where is Britney Spears?" asks Pfc. Joshua Payton, a 21-year-old 1st Infantry Division soldier from Ironton, Ohio, watching the halftime show at Forward Operating Base Wilson's dining facility.

"That was whack," says Staff Sgt. Jamie Riley, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, as the last notes of "Live and Let Die" fade from the huge television.

"This is where you make a beer run," Payton counters.

"Volunteer to make a beer run," replies Riley. "I'd rather see the AFN ads!"

It's hard enough getting up in the middle of the night, Iraq time, to watch football. Even the Super Bowl. So, when all they have is Red Bull and alcohol-free beer, soldiers need somebody besides Paul McCartney to party, especially for a low-scoring, defensive game.

At 7:32 into the third-quarter, Fox finally shows a close-up of a cheerleader, drawing a howl from the crowd.

"That's the best highlight of the whole game!" yells Staff Sgt. Douglas Darden, a 33-year-old 1st ID soldier from Fayetteville, Texas.

The refrain here at this small base outside Tikrit is, next year will be better.

Less Paul McCartney, more Britney Spears, says Payton. More beer, chicken wings, women, and, most importantly, sleep back in the real world instead of missions, mud and microwave popcorn fished out of care packages in a corner of the dining facility.

Yes, football is sacred, Payton says. "You're not an American if you don't watch the Super Bowl." But, he adds, Wilson is "a working FOB," where missions go out around the clock. And his duty day begins at 0800, Super Bowl Monday or not.

Strolling into the DFAC at 2:45 a.m., Riley shouts to the small, sleepy crowd, "Yeah, we gotta party this morning."

With many soldiers scheduled for dawn missions, "We're going to be hurting tomorrow. Or today, I should say."

Only about 35 soldiers out of more than 200 here got up before the chickens and made it to the dining facility for the game, especially with 1st ID troops preparing to return home to Schweinfurt, Germany, via Kuwait. Many of the rest watched it in their barracks.

Especially Philadelphia Eagles fans. It's the sound of one man clapping when the Eagles get on the board first with a touchdown at 9:35 to give them the first quarter.

"Donovan McNabb is the best player in the league," says Spc.

Ray Simmons, 21, 1-4 Cav, who happens to share the same hometown with McNabb — Chicago.

Simmons sticks it out to the bitter end as the Eagles lose 24-21 to the Patriots.

Just how soldiers view the game goes far beyond winning and losing to whether they're coming or going. Simmons and his 1st ID comrades are on their way home.

Representing the newly arrived National Guardsmen is the Boston contingent sitting right in front of the TV. The game was the same as last year — Pats win — when he was back home in Boston "minus the beer and women," says Spc. Ryan McLane, 23.

These guys are hard-core fans, and McLane and Staff Sgt. Fred Vestal, 42, with the 42nd Infantry Division — attached to the 1st Squadron, 278th Regimental Combat Team out of Tennessee — are sporting Patriots headgear.

Hornies Sgt. James Gallagher, 28, and Spc. Jose Perez, 24, round out the Boston foursome.

It's a "fantastic" game, McLane says. The most fun since the Red Sox came back from three games down in October to beat the New York Yankees in the American League Championship Series, Vestal says. The Red Sox would go on to win their first World Series in 86 years.

Ah, except now, it dawns on them they have 10 months left in Iraq, not to mention a year till the next Super Bowl.

"That was," McLane says soberly as he watches Patriots players celebrating on the field, "all we had to look forward to."

Then his face brightens — the BoSox's first game is only six weeks away.

E-mail Terry Boyd at: boyd@mail.strips.osd.mil

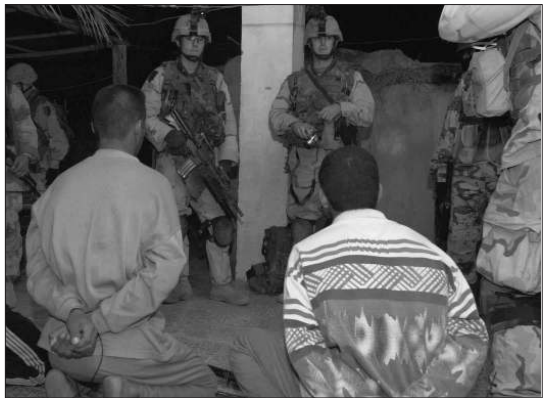


TERRY BOYD/Stars and Stripes

Spc. Ryan McLane, left, and Staff Sgt. Fred Vestal were dressed for victory Monday morning as the Boston soldiers' New England Patriots repeated as Super Bowl victors, their third Super Bowl win in four years.

“Before elections, we were reacting [to attacks]. Now, we’re making them react to us — keeping them guessing.”

Sgt. Michael Robin



Left: American and Iraqi soldiers wait for Iraqi forces to pick up three men suspected of building improvised bombs in Ad-Dawra, Iraq. Above: Sgt. Justin Patterson, left, and Sgt. Javier Aguilar prepare to get in the Bradley fighting vehicles that will take them Ad-Dawra.

PHOTOS BY TERRY BOYD/Stars and Stripes

No letup: 1st ID pounds pavement to the end

With deployment's end in sight, unit and Iraqi forces step up patrols in Ad-Dawra

BY TERRY BOYD

Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING
BASE WILSON, Iraq

In a relatively large force of 14 soldiers, a joint 1st Infantry Division/Iraqi army patrol flows through town with the relentlessness of Jehovah's Witnesses working a virgin neighborhood.

House by house, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, they cover mile after mile of Ad-Dawra, a Sunni Triangle town of 12,000 people.

Just when residents are sure the patrols have passed, there's a knock at the door. Soldiers seem to be everywhere after Bradley fighting vehicles drop scouts from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment for a sunset rendezvous with Iraqi counterparts.

Seven hours later, they've searched dozens of houses.

"Boy," says Sgt. Daniel Veach at about 10 p.m., "the night really flies by when you're busy."

For Veach and his scouts, Thursday night is one of their last after 12 months, hundreds of missions, big victories and bad days including three attacks in the past week.

But instead of letting the clock run, they're playing like they're behind even as 3rd Infantry Division and 42nd Infantry Division soldiers arrive to replace the 1st ID.

"A lot of guys sit on the ball," says Sgt. Justin Patterson. "But we don't want these new guys to be overwhelmed."

"We want a really good battle handover," Veach says. "We don't want everything we worked for to turn to [expletive]."

"Before elections, we were reacting [to attacks]," Sgt. Michael Robin says. "Now, we're making them react to us — keeping them guessing."

Not so long ago, Ad-Dawra was ignored because it was quiet, 1st ID officers say. But when an October offensive drove the insurgents out of Samarra, they regrouped in Ad-Dawra.



Sgt. Michael Robin has a shadow as he takes a global positioning system reading in Ad-Dawra. The prime directive for American soldiers in this area is to help the new Iraqi army become a more effective, reliable presence on the way to replacing coalition forces.

A night engaging the enemy is atypical for scouts, who are more likely to pull surveillance in vulnerable Iraqi army positions or search for insurgents firing rockets.

In Ad-Dawra, they've become dismounted infantry.

A night on the town offers the chance for what soldiers term "movement to contact," which means luring the enemy to an unfair fight.

"You always want contact on your terms, but the bottom line is, the enemy is reluctant to pop RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades]

at tanks," says 1st Lt. Joey Cramley. "They will fire on dismounts. They don't realize there are Bradleys or tanks in overwatch positions."

Lately, insurgents have reminded the scouts that despite their best efforts, this is still their town.

On Tuesday, a grenade went off a few feet from Sgt. Javier Aguilar, spraying him with shrapnel. A few days before that, a makeshift bomb knocked out Staff Sgt. Reginald Graham, a Bradley commander, as he ferried a squad of scouts to Ad-Dawra.

Both soldiers recovered quickly. On Thursday, Aguilar was back but subdued.

Doing this night after night takes fortitude: Insurgents always have the initiative, setting bombs, or shooting, then disappearing into alleys.

Thursday night is — all things considered — a pretty good night in a bad place. Still, the new guys are inheriting an angry populace loyal to their deposed benefactor, Saddam Hussein.

"That tells you all you need to know about the city," Patterson says.

"People down here really, really despise us," Veach says early in the evening. Ad-Dawra is home to Izzat Ibrahim Al-Douri, Saddam's former vice president of the Revolutionary Council and current insurgent leader. Al-Douri's mansion in a neighborhood of mega-houses remains unfinished as if he might return any minute.

But people here are no longer Iraq's elite, Veach says. "Now they're just ordinary Iraqis, and they hate us for that. That's what we're dealing with here."

Of course, nothing in Iraq is quite that simple. There are seven tribes in the area, says Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Stockdill. Every neighborhood has a different feel.

When soldiers knock, they're usually greeted with reserved politeness. In one northside neighborhood, an older, distinguished couple seems pleased to host the soldiers, even if the soldiers say their family is suspect.

"Cola? Cha? Coffee?" the wife asks

Veach and his soldiers. The husband beams as he holds a little boy.

Elsewhere, men and women, young and old, walk stiffly past the patrol. Are searches intrusive? Yes, say soldiers. But they say Ad-Dawra only got worse during the months they left it alone. Soldiers try not to intimidate Iraqis, though that's difficult when entering houses wearing battle rattle, Kevlar and carrying weapons, Robin says.

"We're not going to win hearts and minds," Stockdill says. "Most people are already on one side or the other."

Still, he says, soldiers have to persuade Iraqis "we're not bad guys. I try to talk as a parent, not a soldier. Try to talk as a person" who understands the fear of sending children to a school targeted by bombers.

After a dry spell, Veach and company hit a smallish-but-neat house full of evidence that someone's been busy, perhaps making roadside bombs.

Curious electrical devices are everywhere, including a detonator cap. There are long rods that look like sparklers, used to ignite Russian rockets. Everything can be explained away, the three men inside say, until soldiers find a mujahideen recruitment DVD.

American soldiers zip-strip the men and Iraqi soldiers take them away.

At least to a few, the Americans are the best hope for normalcy. On Tuesday, a neighborhood man tipped soldiers, who seized three suspects in the grenade attack.

"He said he was tired of the gunfire, tired of the violence," Veach said. "I couldn't believe it. It's usually, 'Mister, I hear nothing.'"

So the 1st ID soldiers keep the pressure on Ad-Dawra as time runs out. They'll keep pushing until the last patrol, but that last patrol is on their minds.

After the soldiers are back into the personnel carriers, and the Bradleys are reaching cruising speed, Veach raises his hand and flashes four fingers at his comrades.

Four more missions.

E-mail Terry Boyd at: boydt@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Public mood stronger against insurgency

BY DOUG STRUCK

The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — With a hero who gave his life for the elections, a revived national anthem blaring from car stereos and an increased willingness to help police, the public mood appears to be moving stronger against the insurgency in Iraq, political and security officials say.

Since the Jan. 30 national elections, police and Iraqi National Guardsmen say that they have received more tips from the public, resulting in more arrests and greater effectiveness in their efforts to weaken the violent insurgency rocking the country.

None of the officials said they believed the violence was over. On Monday, insurgents struck at Iraqi police in Basra and Mosul. In Basra, a car bomb exploded outside the gates of a provincial police headquarters, killing 15 people and wounding 17. A suicide bomber blew himself up inside a Mosul teaching hospital, killing 12 policemen guarding the site, according to hospital officials.

But officials in Baghdad said a relative lull in violence in the capital has fueled the

sense that something has fundamentally changed since the vote. A change of attitudes in Baghdad could make a crucial difference in the battle against the insurgency, and a buoyed sense of civic pride is already beginning to change the way the public treats the police, authorities say.

"They saw what we did for them in the election by providing safety, and now they understand this is their army and their sons," said Sgt. Haider Abdul Heidi, a National Guardsman at a checkpoint in Baghdad.

Reports from Iraqis reflect a similar shift in attitudes in large areas of the north and south, although authorities acknowledged that in some parts of the country, people remain hostile to the emerging Iraqi authority and supportive, to varying degrees, of the insurgents.

The insurgency began to emerge soon after the toppling of Saddam Hussein on a

tide of anger over the U.S. occupation. But in interviews over the past week, officials and Baghdad residents cited what they called a renewed nationalist pride since the elections that they said might be dampening those feelings, and might be beginning to dispel Iraqi tolerance and support for the insurgents.

"People seem to linger on the street longer. You can feel the momentum, the sense of optimism."

Haider Abdul Hussein
pharmacy owner

"You can feel the situation has changed," said Haider Abdul Hussein, 30, a pharmacy owner. "People seem to linger on the street longer. You can feel the momentum, the sense of optimism."

Part of that mood change is credited to Abdul Amir, Iraq's newest national hero.

On election day, Amir, 30, a policeman in Baghdad, noticed a man walking toward a polling station in Baghdad who appeared to be carrying something heavy under his coat. Amir wrapped his arms around the man and dragged him away from the crowd. A belt of explosives wrapped around the man blew both men to shreds.

Members of Iraq's interim cabinet have touted Amir as a symbol of national pride. Newspapers have been filled with stories about him. A statue is planned, and the elementary school that served as the polling station where he died might change its name to honor him.

Adil Abdul-Mahdi, the interim finance minister and a powerful figure in the Shiite-led coalition expected to dominate Iraq's new National Assembly, contends the elections created a sense of solidarity that helped dissolve an Iraqi aversion to trusting neighbors, a habit ingrained during the Saddam era.

"People know their neighbors now. They know they are on the same front as their neighbors — they all went out and voted," he said in an interview Saturday. "I think this has uncovered the terrorists and insurgents. They are less legitimate now."

Kurdish leader vows to try to bring Sunnis into political process

BY SCHEHEREZADE

FARAMARZI

The Associated Press

QALHA CHWALAN, Iraq — The Kurdish leader who hopes to become Iraq's next president pledged to try to bring the country's affected Sunni Arabs into the political process even though many of them stayed away from the polls in landmark elections.

Jalal Talabani, a Sunni nominated last week by Kurdish leaders to be their candidate for one of Iraq's top posts, said he would urge Sunni Arabs to take part in drafting a constitution — one of the key tasks of the new government that will soon take office.

As president, Talabani said he could play a mediating role between Sunni Arabs and Shiite Muslims, who apparently scored a landslide victory in the Jan. 30 national elections.

"I expect when in Baghdad I will play a role for reconciliation and will try to bring Sunni Arabs into the process of democracy," Talabani said from his headquarters in Qala Chwalan near Sulaimaniyah.

"We will try to convince them to participate in the committee responsible for the drafting of the constitution."

Talabani, who leads the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said he would put national priorities

ahead of those of the northern autonomous region of Kurdistan if he was elected president, a largely ceremonial post.

In particular, he would work to bring security to the country, eradicate the insurgency and take steps toward a national reconciliation among Iraq's various ethnic and religious groups, which have suffered strained ties in the violent aftermath of Saddam Hussein's ouster.

The elections themselves have added to divisions.

Some Sunni political parties boycotted last week's voting for a National Assembly because of objections to holding elections under the shadow of foreign occupation. Turnout was low in Sunni areas after insurgents threatened violence on election day, raising concerns that the lack of a strong Sunni voice in the new government could further alienate the group.

Sunni Arabs enjoyed exclusive power for nearly a century here, until the fall of Saddam. Since then, they have formed the core of the insurgency.

Their religious rivals, the Shites, are on the verge of reversing nearly a century of oppression. Shites turned out in huge numbers to vote and their leaders are expected to dominate the new government.

Talabani rejected concerns that putting a Kurd at the helm of Iraq's presidency instead of a Sunni Arab would disrupt the delicate power balance between the country's two dominant groups.

Kurds, who are also mostly Sunni Muslims, are one of the country's main ethnic groups and deserve their share in any national government, Talabani said.



Barber Sami Mohammed, left, shaves the face of customer Hamed Taha, 39, as another customer waits in line at a barber shop in central Baghdad on Sunday.

Militants hunt down Baghdad barbers

BY OMAR SINAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Umm Alin says militants killed her son last month for the most unlikely of reasons: He trims men's beards.

In Baghdad's Dora neighborhood, residents say Sunni Muslim extremists have made barbers the new hunted, accusing them of violating a strict reading of Islamic teachings that say men should keep their beards long.

Some extremists also consider Western-style haircuts an offensive symbol of the hated, secularized culture of Europe and the United States.

To them, sporting a clipped beard or a modern haircut is an infraction worthy of death. Black banners mourning the dead were strung up in the neighborhood as the unwitting violators fell one after another to the militants' harsh brand of justice. In one month alone, five barbers were shot dead, residents said.

"He was a haircutter. He only cuts hair," Umm Alin said of her son, Sadiq Abdul Hussein. "He was handsome," she said, gazing at a photo of him.

Abdul Hussein was killed after he shrugged off a threat to stop shaving men's beards or lose his life.

A black mourning banner said only that he died due to a "regrettable incident."

Dora's streets are a battleground for rebels fighting U.S. and Iraqi forces. Drive-by shootings targeting government officials are frequent. It's a symbol of the chaos that has followed Saddam Hussein's ouster nearly two years ago.

Masked, gun-toting militants freely roam its streets, issuing orders and threats and meting out punishment to those who challenge them.

Among the many offenses that run afoul of Dora's new extremist gangs are men with long hair, goatees and even sideburns.

Wesam Noori, a 19-year-old art student, is careful to keep his long hair tucked under a hat.

"We are trying to hide our hair under baseball caps or ski hats," he said.

Ali Hussein, a 25-year-old barber who owns a salon in Dora, says the threat is real enough to threaten his livelihood.

Like other barbers, he's gotten the flyers from militants bearing their instructions for how to cut hair and promising death for those who violate the rules.

They are even forbidding us to hang posters showing the more recent haircut," Hussein said.

He now cuts customers' hair in secret inside his house.

"I don't want to be killed, but I don't want to be broke either," he said.

Mud-wrestling party leads to MP's demotion

Photos taken in Iraq showed female Guard member flashing

By MARTHA WAGGONER
The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Military officials have demoted a female member of a National Guard military police unit for intimate exposure after a mud-wrestling party at the Camp Bucca detention center in Iraq.

Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, spokesman for detainee operations at the U.S. Army-run camp, did not release the name of the soldier, who lifted her shirt and showed her chest in photographs taken at the party.

The New York Daily News identified her as Deanna Allen, 19, and Allen's mother, Ladyna Waldrop of Dallas.

Waldrop said Black Mountain, confirmed the identification. Several photographs of the party printed in the Daily News showed women wrestling in bras and panties in front of a crowd of male soldiers.

After an inquiry, Allen was demoted from specialist to private first class, received a pay cut and was placed on restriction. She is still a guard at the camp, the newspaper said.

Waldrop said her daughter is devastated by the events. "It was just a thing where she was coerced by a bunch of people, and with all the excitement, she lost her sanity for a moment and that's all it took."

"It seems like they're just sin-

gling her out," Waldrop said. "She's the one getting all the publicity and punishment, and that's not right."

The party occurred Oct. 30, as the 160th Military Police Battalion, an Army Reserve Unit from Tallahassee, Fla., prepared to turn over its duties to the Asheville-based 105th Military Police Battalion, Johnson said.

In the course of the transfer of duties, "some individuals in their exuberance decided to put together a mud-wrestling thing," Johnson said Sunday.

Photos of the party were found after the 160th had left Iraq, Johnson said, adding that he understood a soldier had turned over the photos to commanders.

Johnson said it appeared the party was "primarily put on by troops of the 160th," and results of the inquiry were sent to the unit's commander. It wasn't immediately clear if any members of the 160th had been disciplined.

Four or five other members of the 105th who were spectators at the party received counseling, Johnson said.

Johnson said the party was a scandal involving the separate Abu Ghraib prison erupted last spring when photographs were made public showing soldiers taunting naked Iraqi prisoners.



Sheikh Abdul Salam al-Kubaisi, a senior cleric of the Sunni Association of Muslim Scholars, speaks to the press in Baghdad on Monday. He said the association has received letters from security detainees at a U.S. military lockup in southern Iraq detailing allegations of abuse; the military called the claims "completely unfounded."

Gitmo detainees say they made false confessions to stop torture

By PAISLEY DODDS
The Associated Press

Eleven detainees say U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan abused them before they were sent to the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, allegations that include beatings with chains, electric shock and sodomy, according to a lawyer's notes that were recently declassified and released Monday.

Some of the men say they falsely confessed to being members of Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime or the al-Qaida terror network to make the abuse stop, said Tom Wilner, a lawyer for the 11 Kuwaitis being held in the prison camp at the U.S. Navy base in eastern Cuba.

Human rights groups and defense lawyers have long charged that some of the information that led to incarcerations at Guantanamo Bay was obtained through abuse or torture. Many of the 545 prisoners have been held for more than three years, most without charge.

Maj. Michael Shavers, a Pentagon spokesman, said all "credible" abuse allegations are investigated but suggested the Kuwaitis' claims were consistent with al-Qaida tactics to falsely allege abuse or mistreatment.

The government has denied the use of torture, but multiple investigations into abuse of detainees in Afghanistan and at Guantanamo are under way.

Abuses claimed at lockup in Iraq

BAGHDAD — A group of hardline Sunni Muslim clerics on Monday said it has received letters from security detainees at a U.S. military lockup in southern Iraq detailing allegations of abuse that include American guards breaking detainees' legs.

A U.S. spokesman for the military's detention facilities in Iraq said the claims were "completely unfounded and without merit."

Last week, the U.S. command said American guards opened fire on prisoners during a riot at Camp Bucca, killing four detainees and injuring six others.

The riot broke out on Jan. 31 after a routine search for contraband, and guards fired on prisoners only after nonlethal means failed to quell the unrest, the U.S. military said.

At a news conference in Baghdad, a senior official from the Association of Muslim Scholars told reporters the group had received letters from detainees held at the U.S. military's Camp Bucca in the southern city of Umm Qasr that described physical abuse.

In the letters, which were written on pieces of clothing, detainees said American soldiers broke some prisoners' legs, smashed others' fingers and forced some to sit for hours inside large freezers, said Sheikh Abdul Salam al-Kubaisi.

— The Associated Press

Although most of 11 Kuwaitis say physical abuse stopped once they arrived at Guantanamo, all complained of being locked in their cells with scant reading materials and little contact with the outside world or current events.

"At Guantanamo, the physical abuse — at least for Kuwaitis — has stopped, but there has been a switch to mental torture," Wilner said during a conference call from Washington. "Charles Manson has much better prison conditions than these men."

Wilner and other attorneys for the Kuwaitis were allowed to in-

terview the prisoners for the first time in December and January, after the Supreme Court ruled in June that foreigners detained as enemy combatants could challenge their imprisonment.

Wilner last visited his clients Jan. 10-13. He and other attorneys are required to surrender attorney-client notes before leaving the U.S. base. The notes are then sealed and sent to a secure facility in Arlington, Va., where lawyers must ask for them to be unclassified. The attorneys also must get government permission to speak about their conversations.

Arkansas soldiers wrap up Iraq tour with massive yard sale

The Associated Press

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — It's yard sale time in Iraq. Everything must go. When the soldiers of Arkansas' 39th Infantry Brigade arrived at Camp Taji, Iraq, they had few personal items and there were little to buy.

But now that they're about to return home, the soldiers have accumulated whole apartments' worth of electronics, appliances and food.

The haggling was intense under the bright Iraqi sun, and American dollars

"You're selling the Sock 'em Boppers?"
That's how I settle fights in the platoon, man!"

Lt. Kevin Irvin
Arkansas' 39th Infantry Brigade

flowed like a real Arkansas flea market.

Hundreds of the Arkansas-based soldiers stood outside their trailers this week-end with the mini-fridges, CDs, DVDs, space heaters and televisions they bought from Iraqi vendors 11 months ago or received in care packages since then.

They were hawking the wares to members of the incoming 3rd Infantry Division.

Some items were more trivial, but received just as much attention. Sgt. John Szakalski of Auburn, N.Y., the member of the Arkansas unit the others call "Ski," was excited about selling a pair of huge, inflat-

ed boxing mitts.

Lt. Kevin Irvin of North Little Rock wasn't so thrilled about the idea.

"You're selling the Sock 'em Boppers?" That's how I settle fights in the platoon, man!" he yelled in disbelief.

The 3rd Infantry is replacing the 1st Infantry, which absorbed the 39th Infantry Brigade when the National Guard unit was put on active duty in October 2003.

The Arkansas-based soldiers have been in the Middle East since March of last year.

DEFENSE BUDGET PROPOSAL 2006

The Army is budgeting \$224 million for 360 up-armored Humvees and 1,705 heavy chassis Humvees in 2006.

R.J. ORIEZ
Special to
Stars and Stripes



Army prioritizes vehicles

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Army largely will stand fast while Defense Department reviews take place in 2005, but one area they will attack is force protection.

The Army is budgeting \$1.025 billion for "mobility assets," a senior Army budget official said Friday, including \$451.5 million for 3,196 tactical medium vehicles and \$224 million for 360 up-armored Humvees and 1,705 heavy chassis Humvees.

The Army budget also includes \$875 million to buy 240 Stryker tactical wheeled vehicles, enough to outfit the Army's sixth Stryker Brigade.

However, the Army is not planning to buy any additional tanks in fiscal 2006, although \$443 million has been set aside to buy 399 new engines for the M1 Abrams tank.

Many more weapons and vehicles will be purchased with supplemental funds, including more armored Humvees and kits to add armor to vehicles already in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although basically flat at \$11.8 billion compared with \$10.4 billion in 2005, the Army's procurement budget request includes program increases for several programs, with an emphasis on "force protection systems," the official said.

That means the service plans to buy more radios, small arms and



TOM BRADBURY/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

The Army's proposed budget for 2006 includes \$875 million to buy 240 Stryker tactical wheeled vehicles, enough to outfit the sixth Stryker Brigade.

See related story on Page 10

crew-served weapons to outfit combat support units, which in the past typically have been short of these assets.

The Army also has asked for \$1.7 billion to buy training and reserve ammunition, with an emphasis on rounds for the M-4 and M-16 rifles and M-9 pistols carried by the entire force.

The Army is the only service whose fiscal 2006 budget line is flat compared with 2005, but it doesn't matter, officials said: The Army will get "the lion's share" of

a \$75 billion supplemental request for Iraq and Afghanistan that the Bush administration expects to seek from Congress later this week.

Army officials said they are not permitted to discuss the supplemental in detail until the Defense Department releases the entire request.

The Army budget request for fiscal 2006 is \$98.6 billion. Congress allocated the service \$98.9 billion for fiscal 2005.

"Basically the budget just sustains the level we're at," the official said, funding 482,400 soldiers in the active Army, 205,000 troops in the Army Reserve, and 350,000 troops in the Army National Guard.

Bush administration readies supplemental war budget for 2006

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Bush administration is taking the same approach to defense spending in fiscal 2006 it began with the 2004 budget, presenting a "baseline" request to Congress that is only slightly different from the previous year, but adding billions more with a supplemental request to cover operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Congressional Democrats have been critical of the Bush administration's ongoing use of supplementals to fund the war, saying the requests make it easier for defense officials to avoid congressional oversight of war spending and play a shell game with defense spending.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, Congress has approved \$203 billion in supplemental requests. If the latest request is approved, that goes up to \$280 billion.

But defense officials defend the practice, saying that the security situation in Iraq, especially, is so unpredictable that using the regular budget to fund the operation would be too restrictive.

Because supplemental requests are put together much more quickly than regular budgets, defense officials said they have more flexibility to move and add money as conditions on the ground change.

"We are bearing, clearly, the heavy burden in this war," a senior Army budget official said Friday. "The base budget would not allow us to mobilize our forces."

"We can be more accurate in our estimates," another official added. "It's not hiding anything."

Some analysts disagree.

"The war is not a surprise anomaly," said Steve Kosiak, a top analyst for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment in Washington. "We know we're going to be there. Not [budgeting] for war costs is really inexcusable at this point."

"This administration came into office saying they would not play all these games with supplementals, but they've crossed the line, I'd say," he said.

SEE FUNDS ON PAGE 9

The budget request includes a 3.1 percent, across-the-board raise for active-duty soldiers, which will cost taxpayers \$696 million per year, as well as a 2.3 percent raise for Army civilians.

In the past, the Army has asked for raises calculated on rank and time in service. In 2006, however, "the sensing is that we have relieved a lot of the [inequalities] in the pay tables, so there's no need for targeted pay raises," the official said.

The basic allowance for housing, meanwhile, will go up by 4 percent, to account for cost-of-living increases. The Army eliminated out-of-pocket housing costs in fiscal 2005, and the 2006 request will continue that policy.

Other personnel programs, such as health care, education and other quality of life efforts, will be funded at their 2005 levels.

None of the funding for personnel programs will be cut.

The Army's family housing budget request is \$1.4 billion in 2006, compared with the \$1.6 billion allocated in 2005. The decrease does not reflect direct cuts to family housing, however. Since 2000, the Army has been shifting the costs of operating much of its housing to the private sector, so the service's family housing costs continue to drop.

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Fewer Raptors, airmen for Air Force

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force would see more money but fewer airmen under the Defense Department's 2006 budget proposal.

The 6 percent increase Pentagon officials have asked for is based on a reduction of about 2,300 active-duty airmen and another 2,100 drop in reservist numbers. Service officials estimate about 3,800 of those posts will be filled by civilian employees instead.

That change is part of ongoing efforts by the force to "remove the military from non-military jobs." Also, all airmen would receive a 3.1 percent base pay increase, but civilian Air Force employees would see only a 2.3 percent bump in their salary.

The proposed \$102.9 billion budget was briefed to reporters Friday by senior Air

Force officials. Overall spending would be increased by \$6.9 billion, up more than 6 percent from FY 2005. But officials blamed nearly \$800 million of that on increased fuel prices, and another \$2.1 billion on inflationary costs.

The budget includes plans for the service to build and renovate more than 7,200 housing units next year.

However, the fate of major weapons systems, including the F/A-22 Raptor and C-130J Hercules, has been put on hold. Production of the highly coveted F/A-22 was kept flat in the budget, and plans to buy more C-130J cargo planes in 2006 were canceled.

Senior Air Force officials say decisions on long-term productions of these and other systems won't be answered until after a pair of force readiness studies — the quadrennial defense review and the

Pentagon's mobility and capability study — are finished later this year.

And while the F/A-22 funding will actually decrease by about \$300 million under the plan, officials made it clear they hope force strength studies will support increasing production of the stealth fighter, which they see as the long-term replacement for the force's aging fighter force.

As recently as two years ago, service officials said they needed 381 of the aircraft, but current budget plans would pay for only 179 of them over the next decade.

Air Force researchers will take over research and development of unmanned combat planes in 2006, and \$350 million is proposed to pay for that work.

The budget proposal also calls for \$226 million for creation of a unified space radar system for the entire U.S. intelligence community. In the last two years



LOCKHEED MARTIN/AP

The Air Force's F/A-22 Raptor continues to face a steep climb for funding.

about \$240 million has been spent on the system, which is scheduled to be operational in 2015.

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DEFENSE BUDGET PROPOSAL 2006

Carrier to be cut under Navy budget plan

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy wants to cut one of its 12 aircraft carriers, jettison more than 13,000 sailors from its active rolls and slow the purchase of new ships and aircraft, according to the Navy's portion of the 2006 defense budget proposal.

The good news, say service officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, is that with the extra \$6.4 billion they're getting over the \$119 billion approved last year, they'll be able to provide new special pay and bonus money, more housing allowances, stipends for living overseas as well as increases to fleet maintenance and training. The proposal calls for increasing sailors' base pay by 3.1 percent and civilian salaries by 2.3 percent.

Officials refused to announce which of the Navy's 12 carriers would be cut.

The Mayport, Fla.-based USS John F. Kennedy and Japan-based USS Kitty Hawk are the fleet's two oldest carriers and only remaining conventionally powered big decks.

Kitty Hawk, however, is already slated for decommissioning in 2008, the same year the next nuclear-powered carrier, the George H.W. Bush — comes online, leaving Kennedy as a likely option.

Still, cautioned the officials amid reporter speculation, "some of our oldest carriers are not in the worst material condition."

One official also hinted at a shakeup in homeports for the carrier fleet.



COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY/SHNS

The USS John F. Kennedy is rumored to be the aircraft carrier the Navy would cut out of its fleet of 12 under the 2006 defense budget plan.

"Certainly there is concern at the Department of the Navy on having all of our carriers at one port," the Navy official said, referring to the fleet concentrations in San Diego and Norfolk, Va. He said an environmental study had been earmarked in this

budget to look at basing a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Mayport.

"That's certainly a consideration," he said.

Whichever carrier is cut, its corresponding air wing will remain.

The long-term savings of cutting a carrier will be about \$300 million per year, much of that coming from personnel savings, he said.

Those cuts will be part of the 13,200 sailors the plan would drop from active duty next year. The official said the service would save \$404 million this year — and \$1 billion a year after that — by cutting its active duty rolls from 365,000 to 352,700 next year.

While the Navy will be shrinking, that does not mean sailors should expect more time underway, he said.

"I don't think any of this means more sea time," the official said.

The Navy will add 23 new jets and helicopters to the fleet next year under the budget request as well as three surface combatants and two logistics ships. It will lose, however, a planned attack submarine, and the purchase of a slew of new ships and aircraft will be slowed down in the coming years.

In all, the fleet will go from 285 ships to 289 ships next year if the budget is approved, but slowly increase to a planned 305 ships by 2011.

The Navy's purchase of its new F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, which is set to replace four types of aircraft on the flight deck, stays on course with another 38 strike fighters entering the fleet next year, plus another four of its radar-jamming variant.

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Funds: Army awaits \$5B for setting up three new BCTs

FUNDS, FROM PAGE 8

The supplemental request will pay for all the costs associated with Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, including the salaries of an additional 18,000 active-duty soldiers who are now on the payroll; the cost of refurbishing equipment lost or worn out in Iraq and Afghanistan; the ammunition expended by U.S. troops in those countries; and equipping, housing, feeding and entertaining deployed troops.

But the supplemental also will pay for more than just direct war costs. Army officials are counting on receiving \$5 billion in the upcoming request to create and equip three new brigade combat teams — the service's new self-sufficient, lighter, high-tech "transformational" unit with about 4,000 soldiers.

Paying for the three new brigade combat teams in the supplemental is kosher, an Army official said, even though the units will be a permanent part of the Army, not just something cobbled together in response to the Iraq or Afghanistan operations.

"These are forces we are deploying to the battle space," the official said. When Army units return from Iraq rotations, "we are resetting them [as BCTs] to go right back into the war."

USMC planned purchases rolled back

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Marines are hoping to man two new infantry battalions, three Light Armored Reconnaissance Companies and several new support units being added to the active forces, according to the Defense Department's 2006 budget request.

But the service will have to wait longer for the fielding of the new V-22 tilt-rotor Osprey and amphibious Expeditionary Assault Vehicle, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

In all, the White House hopes to put \$17.5 billion into the corps coffers next year. The proposal calls for increasing Marines' base pay by 3.1 percent and civilian salaries by 2.3 percent.

Manpower for the new units will come from job conversions that put civilians into positions that some 2,500 Marines had been filling, according to a senior Pentagon official who briefed reporters Friday.

Meanwhile, an additional 3,000 Marines will be temporarily added to the Corps' active strength of 175,000 in a separate "supplemental" budget request expected to go to Congress soon.



According to the 2006 defense budget proposal, the Marine Corps will cut the purchase of its V-22 tilt-rotor Osprey next year from 15 to nine.

VERNON PUGH
Courtesy of
the U.S. Navy

Cash for new bonus money is also expected to be part of the Corps' portion of the supplemental.

The Corps is projecting it will buy 1,310 new Humvees and 77 of its 155 mm Howitzers as part of its \$1.4 billion procurement budget proposal for 2006.

The Marines will cut the purchase of the still-developmental V-22 tilt-rotor Osprey next year from 15 to nine. In 2007, purchases will be cut in half from

29 to 14. In all, over the next four years, plans now call for the Corps to buy a total of 72 Ospreys instead of the 107 that had been planned.

The Expeditionary Assault Vehicle, slated to begin replacing the Corps' aging fleet amphibious armored vehicles this year, now won't begin hitting units until 2007, according to service officials.

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IN THE STATES

Bush sends Congress \$2.57T spending plan

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush sent Congress a \$2.57 trillion budget plan Monday that would boost spending on the military and homeland security but seeks spending cuts across a wide swath of other government programs. Bush's budget would reduce subsidies paid to farmers, cut health payments for poor people and veterans and trim spending on the environment and education.

"It is a budget that sets priorities," Bush said in a meeting with cabinet members. "It's a budget that reduces and eliminates redundancy. It's a budget that's a lean budget."

Bush acknowledged that it would be difficult to eliminate popular programs but he said programs must prove their worth. "I look forward to explaining to the American people why we made some of the requests that we made in our budget," the president told reporters.

The budget — the most austere of Bush's presidency — would eliminate or vastly scale back 150 government programs. It will spark months of contentious debate in Congress, where lawmakers will fight to protect their favored programs.

House Democratic Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California called Bush's budget "a hoax on the American people. The two issues that dominated the president's State

of the Union address — Iraq and Social Security — are nowhere to be found in this budget."

Bush's budget does not reflect the costs for his No. 1 domestic priority, overhauling Social Security by including younger workers to set up private investment accounts. Aides said since the plan is still being developed, accurate cost estimates could not be made.

The spending document projects that the deficit will hit a record \$427 billion this year, the third straight year that the red ink in dollar terms has set a record. Bush projects that the deficit will fall to \$390 billion in 2006 and gradually decline to \$233 billion in 2009 and \$207 billion in 2010.

Bush's 2006 spending plan, for the budget year that begins next Oct. 1, counts on a healthy economy to boost revenues by 6.1 percent to \$2.18 trillion. Spending, meanwhile, would grow by 3.5 percent to \$2.57 trillion.

Democrats complained that Bush was resorting to draconian cuts that would hurt the needy in order to protect his first tax cuts that primarily benefited the wealthy.

"This budget is part of the Republican plan to cut Social Security benefits while handing out lavish tax breaks for multimillionaires," said Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. "Its cuts in veterans programs, health care and education reflect the wrong priorities and its huge deficits are fiscally irresponsible."

Candidate for Homeland denied asylum in cases

BY LARA JAKES JORDAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Homeland Security Department nominee Michael Chertoff denied asylum, ordered deportation or otherwise ruled against foreigners in 14 of 18 immigration cases he handled during his short tenure as a federal appeals court judge.

But he has secured grudging respect from immigration rights groups who applaud his legal support of a family trying to escape China's forced abortion policies.

An Associated Press review of Chertoff's decisions offers insight on how he may run the nation's immigration system that will become his responsibility as head of the Homeland Security Department if, as expected, he wins Senate confirmation.

Chertoff wrote the majority opinion in 17 immigration-related cases and a dissent in one since being seated on the Philadelphia-based 3rd U.S. Circuit of Appeals in June 2003.

"We're watching to see what happens," said Erin Corcoran, staff attorney for Human Rights First, which advocates for asylum cases. "We have concerns, but at the same time, he's been less hardline on the issues than some other people have been."

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is scheduled to vote Monday night to advance Chertoff's nomination to the Senate floor.

As Homeland Security secretary, Chertoff will have wide discretion in carrying out immigration policy. While on the bench, he said, he gained insight into the complexities of our immigration structure."



Secretary of Homeland Security nominee Michael Chertoff testifies last week during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in Washington.

The cases Chertoff examined covered a gamut of immigrants' claims of abuse, from being beaten by police, forced into prostitution rings or denied protection from hate crimes against gays.

Most were routine cases that did not set a legal precedent, and may have "raised a somewhat strained defense in the context of otherwise provable immigration violations," said Pepperdine University constitutional law scholar Douglas Kmiec, a Justice Department legal counsel during the Reagan and first Bush administrations.

But those cases trouble critics who fear the former prosecutor and Justice Department criminal division chief — with his tough-on-crime-and-terrorism reputation — will fail to uphold immigrants' rights.

Chertoff has come under fire for his role in ordering the roundup of hundreds of foreigners — many for minor immigration violations — during the Justice Department's investigation immediately following the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

CIA chief Goss making staff changes at the top

BY KATHERINE PFLEGER
SHRADER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Monday was Day One of a new era at the Central Intelligence Agency as director Porter Goss, on the job for four months, finally gets his leadership team in place.

The time since Goss' swearing in has proved to be a rocky one, with an agency still reeling from its failure to warn of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and its flawed prewar intelligence on Iraq's weapons.

More than a dozen senior officials have left since Goss arrived. The messy details of some internal battles have seeped into the news.

Critics have complained that Goss, a former Republican congressman who served as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, politicized the agency by hiring Republican aides.

Goss' allies say wholesale changes were essential after the intelligence failures of Sept. 11 and Iraq.

"You couldn't expect anybody to have the same leadership in place and improve the operation of the agency," said Sen. Saxby Chambliss, a Georgia Republican who is a friend of Goss and a mem-

ber of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

"While it's been very controversial, Porter had to make some change of people, who were good people and individually they were nice people, but the job wasn't getting done," Chambliss said.

Among the new hires, Goss is making 30-year CIA veteran John Kringsen the head of the Directorate of Intelligence, the agency's analysis division. That move on Monday means Goss will have in place all the division chiefs he has chosen.

Goss kept one holdover from the seven-year tenure of former CIA Director George Tenet — science and technology director Donald Kerr.

Goss, a CIA operative in the 1960s, got a mandate from President Bush and the Congress to tackle tough intelligence changes.

A counterterrorism official said Goss is collapsing layers of bureaucracy, so that the operatives in the field are closer to the decision-makers at CIA's headquarters.

"Changing a risk-averse culture doesn't take a lot of money. It takes a change in senior management," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

U.S. gasoline prices predicted to break records this year

BY BRAD FOSS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Gasoline prices rose more than 7 percent in January, which typically is one of the slowest driving months of the year. That's leaving experts to predict pump prices may surge past last year's record highs when highway travel picks up late in the spring.

Government figures show that the average price of regular unleaded has risen in each of the last four weeks, jumping from \$1.78 at the start of the year to \$1.91 a gallon in the week ended Jan. 31. That's more than 30 cents a gallon higher than a year earlier.

Prices are highest on the West Coast, averaging \$1.99 a gallon and lowest in the Rocky Mountain region, averaging \$1.83 a gallon.

Last year, the average price peaked above \$2 a gallon in May, just before Memorial Day, which is the unofficial start of the summer driving season. To be just a dime short of that level in early February is not good news for motorists, analysts said.

Carl Larry, head of energy futures at Barclays Bank in New York, said he expects retail gasoline prices to rise above last year's peak due to rising demand for fuel and the higher price of crude oil, from which gasoline is refined.

"We're starting to see the economy come back, so demand can only go higher from where it's at," Larry said.

Over the past four weeks, nationwide demand for gasoline is up more than 1 percent at 8.8 million barrels, according to the latest U.S. government data.

Larry said gasoline prices would be propped higher this spring by fears about the nation's growing dependence on imports and the possibility of supply-chain snags as refiners temporarily shut down, or turn around operations in order to shift production from winter-grade fuel to cleaner-burning summer blends.

"All these things fall into place," he said.

Another indicator of the strength of the U.S. gasoline market, the nation's largest independent refiner, Valero Energy Corp. of San Antonio, has seen its stock price more than double in the past year.

Tom Kloza, director of Oil Price Information Service in Lakewood, N.J., said he anticipates the price of gasoline to "rocket higher in the next 90 days." Nationally, Kloza predicts average gasoline prices will pass \$2.15 and even run as high as \$2.50. That said, he expects those highs to be short-lived.



A truck is gassed up Sunday in Dallas. Experts predict record-breaking pump prices this year.



Above: Gladys Knight is seen in an MNBA commercial that was shown during the Super Bowl on Sunday. Right: Paul McCartney performs during halftime at Alltel Stadium on Sunday in Jacksonville, Fla.



AP photos

Wacky ads steal Super Bowl show

BY SETH SUTEL
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Sure, Super Bowl ads have been wacky before. But Gladys Knight scoring in a rugby game? MC Hammer and a '72 Impala getting hurled over a backyard fence — to plug potato chips? There were plenty of curiosities in this year's crop of ads tailored for the game, the place where the advertising industry goes all out to show off its most daring, creative work and make the most of the biggest television audience of the year.

What we didn't see was a repeat of last year's rampage of off-color humor. And no wardrobe malfunctions — unless you count a cheeky spot from new-comer GoDaddy.com, a vendor of Web site names, that poked fun at the hubbub over the halftime incident from last year with a fake hearing into broadcast decency. An elderly politician clutches for an oxygen mask after a buxom woman's top nearly falls down from a broken shoulder strap.

Some marketing pundits still say that \$2.4 million — that's

McCartney plays it safe at halftime performance

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL wanted a safe halftime show after last year's Janet Jackson fiasco, and Paul McCartney delivered.

When McCartney stripped off his jacket mid-way through his Super Bowl halftime performance, all he revealed was a long-sleeved red shirt. Nothing malfunctioned. And if he wore any nipple jewelry, he mercifully kept it to himself.

It was sweet nostalgia for those stunned by Jackson's MTV-produced show, if a bit off-putting for the kids. Each of McCartney's four songs was more than 30 years old.

Surely you recall last year's climax to a body-shaking, crutch-grabbing festival: Justin Timberlake yanking part of Jackson's top off to reveal her bare breast to some 90 million viewers.

McCartney's stage set — a giant cross of video boards on the stadium floor with the singer at the center — was visually arresting, although it made his opening song, "Drive My Car," look like one of the broadcast's dozens of auto commercials.

McCartney's theatrical James Bond theme

\$80,000 a second — is too much to pay for a 30-second advertising spot.

But with so few truly mass audiences left, the networks don't

seem to have any problem selling out the full inventory of ads and charging ever-higher prices for them.

This year saw a slew of new comers, including Volvo, with a rover spot featuring Richard Branson going into space in a decade.

A sticker on the side boasts that his other vehicle is a Volvo.

This ad even comes with its own promotion, giving viewers a chance to sign up to win a trip into space on commercial space flights Branson is planning.

Lincoln — which hadn't been in the game for a decade — ran a funny ad toward the start of the Super Bowl in which a tough group of bikers is scared away from a roadside diner after seeing a line of Lincoln trucks parked in front. The gang of Hell's Angels look-alikes are apologetically embarrassed when one of them sheepishly suggests that the salad bar up the road is better anyway.

Several of this year's ads were definitely puzzlers.

Gladys Knight appears as a rugby player in a pitch for the credit card issuer MNBA Corp.,

"Live and Let Die" was a perfect backdrop for a stadium fireworks show. The lights, placards and video images also made "Hey Jude" a sight to see.

There wasn't any danger of a lip-synch controversy, either; you could tell it was the lived-in voice of a 62-year-old singer.

It was strange seeing the former Beatle, a bold and shocking performer for another generation, now presented as the sedate option. NFL censors were probably hoping the "California grass" reference in "Get Back" slipped by unnoticed, or figured people would think he was simply referring to a football field.

Another irony: the overwhelmingly safe and patriotic musical presentations before and during the game appearing on the usually envelope-pushing Fox network, while last season's shocker came on foggy-friendly CBS.

Before the game, Alicia Keys oozed class and chops as she took a "duet" with the late singer Ray Charles on one of his signatures, "America the Beautiful" — and made it work wonderfully. A picture of Charles singing appeared on the stadium scoreboard screens.

and both MC Hammer and a '72 Impala come being charged over a backyard fence in a spot for Lay's potato chips.

While some of this year's ads may have been somewhat off, they were a far cry from last year's selection that offered crude jokes, including an accidental bikini wax for Cedric the Entertainer, and a guy who squeals in delight when a blast of cold air blows up his kilt, Marilyn Monroe-style.

Pepsi, a perennial Super Bowl advertiser, referred to one of its own classic ads by showing Cindy Crawford ogling a plain-dressed but hunky guy walking along and sipping on a can of Diet Pepsi as the theme from "Saturday Night Fever" plays in the background.

Crawford herself was the star of a 1992 Pepsi ad where two young boys ogled her as she pulled into a dusty gas station and quaffed a Pepsi in slow motion.

But this being 2005, after Crawford and numerous other women are stopped in their tracks by the hunkalicious Diet Pepsi drinker, there's one more way of eyes caught by the passing stud: those of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" host Carson Kressley.

Study: Chubby cheeks due to sweet drinks

BY CARLA K. JOHNSON
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Sweet drinks — whether Kool-Aid with sugar or all-natural apple juice — seem to raise the risk of pudgy preschoolers getting fatter, new research suggests.

That may come as a surprise to parents who pride themselves on seeking out fruit drinks with no added sugar.

"Juice is definitely a part of this," said lead researcher Jane Welsh of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While fruit juices does have vitamins, nutritionists say it's inferior to fresh fruit.

The new U.S. dietary guidelines, for example, urge consumers away from juice, suggesting they eat whole fruit instead.

The bottom line, though, is that "children need very few calories in their day," Welsh said.

"Sweet drinks are a source of added sugar in the diet."

She said preschoolers were better off snacking on fruit or drinking water or milk.

Welsh's research, published in the February issue of Pediatrics, found that for 3- and 4-year-olds already on the heavy side, drinking something sweet once or twice a day doubled their risk of becoming seriously overweight a year later.

The sweet drinks seemed to have little effect, however, on children of normal weight.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting preschoolers to 4 to 6 ounces of juice per day. Some parents and schools are paying attention.

One Chicago Health Start program banned juice last year as part of an anti-obesity effort after finding that one out of five of its students was obese.

Monica Dillon, community health nurse for the Howard Area Family Center, said the preschool also added more fruits and vegetables to meals and more exercise to the daily schedule. The preschool has never served soft drinks.

The juice ban drew no complaints, Dillon said. "The kids didn't miss it at all."

The Pediatrics study followed 10,904 Missouri children in a nutrition program for low-income families.

Researchers looked at the effect of sweet drinks in three groups: normal and overweight children, those at risk of becoming overweight, and those who already were overweight.

The researchers compared the children's heights and weights, approximately one year apart.

The link between sweet drinks and being overweight showed up for all three weight groups, although it wasn't statistically significant for the normal and underweight children.

The children in the study drank, on average, more fruit juice than soft drinks or sweetened fruit drinks.

Sweet drinks are high in calories and low in fiber.

OPINION

If Dean gets nod, it's all over but the shouting

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

A few weeks ago, when former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean declared his intention to run for chairman of the Democratic National Committee, news reports had the general tone of "Get this, this crazy scream guy is back and he wants to run the party." [Now, less than] a week before the vote, his victory is a *fait accompli*. How did this happen? Are Democrats suicidally crazy?

Wait. That's too easy. Let me rephrase the question. Why are Democrats suicidally crazy?

The conventional rag against Dean as DNC chairman is essentially the same as the conventional rag against him as presidential candidate a year ago. Namely, he reinforces all the party's weaknesses. Democrats need to appeal to culturally traditional voters in the Midwest and border states who worry about the party's commitment to national security. Dean, with his intense secularism, arrogant style, throngs of high-profile counter-culture supporters and association with the peace movement, is the precise opposite of the image Democrats want to send out.

The conventional rag is completely right. But, in a way, Dean is even less suited to run the DNC than he is to run for president.

The DNC chairman has two main jobs. First, he transmits the party's message — an important role when the party lacks a president and majority leaders in Congress. This job requires one to master the dismal art of "message discipline," boiling down the party's ideas into a few simple phrases and repeating them over and over until they have sunk into the public consciousness.

It's a role for which Dean is particularly ill-suited. During his campaign, remember,

he fashioned himself a straight talker, delighting reporters by repeatedly wandering "off message." On the plus side, he won friends in the media by appearing honest and human. On the negative side, he did himself enormous damage, when, for example, he suggested that he wouldn't prejudice Osama bin Laden until he had been convicted in a court of law.

For presidential candidates, the negatives of "straight talk" usually outweigh the positives. Paul Maslin, Dean's former colleague, wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* after the campaign fell apart: "Our candidate's erratic judgment, loose tongue, and overall stubbornness wore our spirits down." But at least for a presidential campaign there are some positives in going off message. In a job like party chairman, a loose cannon is nothing but downside.

The second major task of the DNC chairman is to run the party organization. And here, if this is at all possible, Dean looks even worse. Garance Franke-Ruta, who wrote sympathetic Dean pieces in the *American Prospect* during the campaign, spoke with several former Dean staffers. One called the candidate "a horrible manager" and added, "I wouldn't trust him to run a company." Another called his management style "just a disaster."

Dean, remember, raised about \$50 million by positioning himself as the most anti-Bush candidate, but blew through it so fast that he was nearly broke by January. This represents the sort of financial acumen you associate with — clueless, flash-in-the-pen celebrities — ded, the narrator for VH1's "Behind the Music." But the good times and lavish spending couldn't last for M.C. Hammer — not with chairman of major political parties.

So how did Dean manage to trounce all



THE SCREAM, 2005...

comers for this position? Dean's supporters see his triumph as the victory of the masses over a tiny Democratic elite desperately trying to cling to power. As one left-liberal blogger gloated: "The fact that Howard Dean will most likely be heading up the Democratic Party is our victory. It is the voice of the grass roots lifted up into the halls of power once owned by the 'aristocracy of consultants.'" That actually has it backward. A recent *Wall Street Journal* poll found that only 27 percent of Democrats approve of Dean.

In the latest issue of the *New Republic*, Ryan Lizza described how Dean had prevailed in a process of third-rate intrigue.

The choosing of the DNC chairman has been dominated by state parties, whose concerns revolve around expanding perks, including a demand for a \$200,000 handout for each state party from the national party. Nobody seemed to pay much attention to the good the party as a whole. Meanwhile, Dean touched those leaders' ideological ergonomic zones, promising to "feed our core constituencies" and not be "Republican-lite."

As the last election showed, the core constituencies are plenty well fed. There just aren't enough of them to win the White House.

Jonathan Chait is a senior editor at *The New Republic*. This column first appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*.

PBS won't air 'Buster,' but it responds to fear factor

BY DEBRA CHASNOFF

This month I experienced *déjà vu*. PBS — the Public Broadcasting Service — decided not to distribute an episode of its cartoon "Postcards From Buster" (in which Buster the animated bunny meets two children whose parents are lesbians). The same day the secretary of education sent PBS a letter demanding that the network not air this show. "Many parents would not want their young children exposed to the lifestyles portrayed in the episode," she wrote.

She also asked PBS to return federal funds used to make the episode.

I thought back to when a documentary I directed, "It's Elementary — Talking About Gay Issues in School," was offered for broadcast through American Public Television. The film shows how and why schools are finding age-appropriate ways to address gay and lesbian issues in education — confronting anti-gay name-calling, helping students to discuss gay-related topics as part of lessons on current events and reading books that have characters with gay parents.

When "It's Elementary" was scheduled to air on public television, PBS received more letters of protest than for any other program in its history. And what was PBS's response? "Robert Conrad, then president of the network." This sounds to me like a program that helps parents do a better job of parenting, and that is the kind of thing that public broadcasting has a right to do.

"It's Elementary" went on to air on more than 300 public television stations around the country. No such courage this month.

Explaining why the network yanked the show, Lea Sloan, vice president of media re-

lations at PBS, said, "We wanted to make sure that parents had an opportunity to introduce this subject to their children in their own time."

What would be Education Secretary Margaret Spellings and the executives at PBS living in? It seems they think that there is one world where all the families and children live and another, separate one where all those people live. Apparently it's up to (straight) parents to decide when to open the borders and let their children have a controlled peek at the other side.

At this point in American history, that position is not only ridiculous, it's insulting and highly irresponsible. Millions of children have a parent, uncle, aunt, cousin, sibling or grandparent who is gay. Thousands of dis-

cated teachers, school administrators and coaches are gays or lesbians. What kind of message are we sending to our youth when we say that their loved ones and trusted mentors aren't safe for children to meet on TV?

Even if we keep Buster the bunny from visiting children whose parents are gay, we can't put the rabbit back in the hat. Gay people and gay issues are part of everyone's world now. Our only choice is whether we give kids the skills and opportunities to treat everyone respectfully, or whether we try to perpetuate a false silence around the real lives of millions of Americans.

There seems to be a fear that if we allow depictions of families on public TV that don't seem "typical" then somehow we are encouraging children to create those kinds

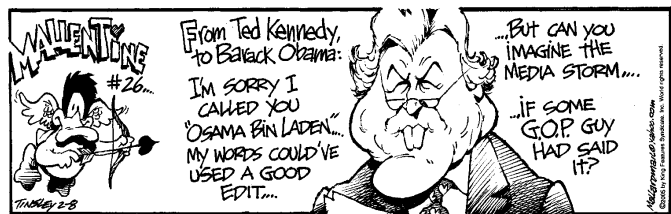
of families instead of the "real" or "legitimate" kind. In fact, when we give young people the opportunity to see that there are all types of family structures, we are helping to lay the foundation for them to understand and respect differences of all kinds, a skill that has never been more needed.

PBS says it seeks to use "the power of non-commercial television ... to enrich the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services that inform, inspire and delight." All Americans means all kids, regardless of which combination of adults comes together to love and nurture them.

Debra Chasnoff is a filmmaker and winner of a 1991 Academy Award for best documentary short subject. She is director of the Respect for All Project, which works to advance understanding of diversity among young people. This column first appeared in *The Washington Post*.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



IN THE WORLD

18 die at Spanish hostel

TODOLELLA, Spain — The host of the birthday party that ended in tragedy survived by sleeping in another room, while 18 guests died of apparent carbon monoxide poisoning from a malfunctioning gas heater, authorities said Monday.

Autopsies were carried out overnight following the discovery of the bodies Sunday afternoon at a hostel converted from a 15th-century hermitage in the Maestrazgo mountain district near this village in eastern Spain.

The dead included 11 men and seven women, most of them at least 30 years old. They slept together in an open room warmed by a butane gas heater.

Raid ends standoff

BERN, Switzerland — Swiss special forces stormed the Spanish consulate Monday to end a hostage standoff nearly seven hours after three masked assailants broke into the building, but the suspected robbers managed to elude police, authorities said.

The three, believed to be armed with knives and a handgun, had seized the consulate in the Swiss capital shortly before 8 a.m., taking three people hostage, authorities said. One captive managed to escape and the two others were let go, they said.

A special police unit went to the consulate around 2:30 p.m. but were unable to find the suspects, said Juergen Mosmann, a spokesman for Bern state police. No shots were fired, he said.

Pubs can expand hours

LONDON — Pubs, clubs and other drinking venues in England and Wales can apply to stay open until 11 p.m. a day, under new laws that come into effect Monday.

Currently, many British drinkers imbibe as much as they can as quickly as they can before pubs close at 11 p.m. Then heavy drinkers all stumble into the streets at the same time, often leading to fights and other drunken misbehavior. The government says the new laws will help curb the problem because people will drink in a more relaxed manner and leave at different times.

Although establishments can apply for the extended licenses starting Monday, the new hours won't come into effect in England and Wales until November. Scotland is conducting its own review of licensing laws.

Cuba bans smoking

HAVANA — Cuba on Monday began an island-wide ban on smoking in public places such as stores, theaters and office buildings.

But some Cubans didn't seem to know, or care, and continued to light up their black tobacco cigarettes in enclosed areas now designated as nonsmoking.

News of the ban was first announced last month, when it was published in Cuba's National Gazette by the Communist Ministry.

The resolution said the move was "taking into account the damage to human health caused by the consumption of cigarettes and the harm to the environment contributing to a change in the attitudes of our population."

From The Associated Press

Rice pushes U.S. role in peace plan

Israel, Palestinians say they'll declare cease-fire

BY ANNE GEARAN

The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Monday promised active U.S. involvement in Mideast peace-making, saying Washington would dispatch a high-level "security coordinator" to the region and send more than \$40 million in immediate aid to the Palestinians.

Rice also said Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon have accepted invitations for separate meetings with President Bush at the White House in the spring.

Israeli and Palestinian officials said Monday that the two sides will declare a formal end to more than four years of fighting at Tuesday's Mideast summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

She added what she has heard from both sides bodes well for their summit on Tuesday.

"The U.S. will do its part," she said at a joint news conference with Abbas in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Rice said Lt. Gen. William E. Ward, deputy commanding general for U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army, has been chosen for the job of security coordinator.

She said Ward, who was also posted in Germany, Somalia and Egypt, would visit the Middle



U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, left, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas stand next to a photo of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the presidential headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah on Monday.

East in coming weeks and report directly to her.

Ward will monitor compliance with security requirements, including reform of the Palestinian security forces, Rice said. She stressed that the United States prefers that Israel and the Palestinians negotiate with each other directly.

Israel in the past has balked at international monitors, but a top Sharon aide said Ward would be welcome. "This is someone who will be like a referee, if there is a need ... to mediate and prevent

a crisis," said the aide, Raanan Gissin. "The American involvement will increase as progress is made."

Bush said that the background for peace talks has improved with Abbas' election.

"Abbas comes to the table with a mandate from a lot of Palestinians," Bush told reporters at the end of a Cabinet meeting. "He has been through an election. He was endorsed by the Palestinian people." Abbas was elected the president of the Palestinian Authority on Jan. 9, succeeding the late Yasser Arafat.

Ward's Army background

Lt. Gen. William E. "Kip" Ward is deputy commanding general for U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army.

Ward was commissioned in 1971. Before taking the US-AEUR position — the second Germany tour of his career — Ward was headquartered in Sarajevo, Bosnia, as commander of the Stabilization Force for Operation Joint Forge.

Ward's Middle East experience includes his tour as chief of the Office of Military Cooperation in the American Embassy in Egypt.

He participated in Operation Restore Hope in Mogadishu, Somalia, as commander of the 2nd Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division (Light) from Fort Drum, N.Y.; and his command of the 25th Infantry (Light) and U.S. Army, Hawaii, at Schofield Barracks.

Ward has served two tours on the Army Chief of Staff and two tours on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

— Stars and Stripes

Admiral: U.S. military faced suspicion Indonesian commanders were wary of force early in relief mission

BY YEON EN-LAI

The Associated Press

SINGAPORE — The U.S. military said Monday it faced initial suspicion from Indonesian military commanders during its massive tsunami relief efforts, while Sri Lanka's armed forces accused a relief group of trying to smuggle bomb-making materials to Tamil Tiger rebels.

A British naval ship, meanwhile, surveyed the ocean floor near the epicenter of the quake that triggered killer waves across Asia, checking the stability of tectonic plates as countries considered a tsunami-warning system for the region.

The massive recovery effort forced its seventh week with the U.S. military winding down its deliveries of aid by helicopter. But workers clearing debris in Indonesia's Aceh province on Sumatra island are still finding several hundred corpses a day.

Rear Adm. William Douglas Crowder, commander of the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier group, said despite a difficult start the relationship with the Indonesian military improved after they worked together to deliver food and other relief supplies to victims in Aceh, the worst-affected area.

"There was a lot of suspicion when the U.S. military arrived," Crowder said at a briefing in Singapore. "After 35 days, there were

some previously strong opinions about the U.S. military that were somewhat altered."

The USS Lincoln left Aceh last week and docked in Singapore ahead of its departure for the Pacific on Tuesday.

Aceh is staunchly Muslim, and the U.S.-led war in Iraq was deeply unpopular in Indonesia.

In Sri Lanka, port authorities over the weekend found thousands of small steel balls hidden in water pots in a shipping container addressed to the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, the army's Web site said.

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels, who fought a two-decade civil war against the government, are known for loading suicide bombs with metal balls to cause maximum damage.

Kuwait access to some Islamic Web sites

BY DIANA ELIAS

The Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY — Kuwait is blocking Islamic Web sites that incite violence as part of its all-out war on terror following recent clashes with fundamentalists who allegedly planned to attack Americans and the country's security forces, a senior official said Monday.

Kuwait began to block the sites Sunday. Three Kuwaiti sites are now inaccessible, and technicians are working with security officials and Internet providers to crack down on non-Kuwaiti sites, said Hamed Khaja, undersecretary of the Communications Ministry.

He declined name any of the sites.

"A few weeks ago, we started to make a list of these sites, and yes,

terday we began to actually block them," Khaja said.

Security officials were determining which sites "incite terrorism and instability" and the ministry was working with the Internet providers to block them, he said.

Since Jan. 10, police have clashed with Muslim fundamentalists and pursued them around the country, killing eight militants and arresting scores of others.

Khaja, the communications official, conceded no blockage of Web sites can be completely effective because many users can get around it.

"We are trying to do our best," he said. "It is not possible to prevent everybody from opening their eyes to the spread of destructive ideas ... but if we limit access to them by 90 percent, that would be a great achievement."

Human trials for AIDS vaccine begin in India

BY NIRMALA GEORGE

The Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Indian scientists on Monday began the country's first human clinical trials of a vaccine designed to prevent AIDS.

The vaccine trials are part of an international partnership among the state-run Indian Council of Medical Research, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative and U.S.-based Targeted Genetics Corp., Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss told reporters in the western city of Pune.

"Doctors in Pune have today inoculated the first group of volunteers with the potential vaccine," Ramadoss said moments after the first subject was injected.

The testing involves 30 male and female volunteers between 18 and 45 years of age who are free of HIV/AIDS and other major illnesses, doctors involved in the trials said.

During the trials, which are expected to take about 15 months, the vaccine will be given to the volunteers to induce a response from their immune systems that may protect them against HIV infection, said N.K. Ganguly, director of the ICMR.

"The volunteers have been made aware of the risks involved, they have been counseled and their health status will be monitored all the time," Ganguly said.

The New York-based IAVI has conducted trials of the vaccine at German university clinics in Bonn and Hamburg, and also at Belgian hospitals in Brussels and Antwerp, a representative of the initiative, Seth Berkley, said.

The first-phase testing which began a year ago in Germany and Belgium is aimed at determining the safety of the vaccine and whether it produces immune responses.

Known as tgAAC09, the vaccine targets HIV subtype C — prevalent in South Africa, India and China and responsible for a large part of the world's HIV infections.

The vaccine was developed by Seattle-based Targeted Genetics Corp. and the Columbus Children's Research Institute.

India has more than 5 million people living with HIV/AIDS, the world's second-highest number of infections after South Africa.

Almost one-fourth of them are children and young people under the age of 25.

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Sisters Hannah Katz, 78, left,
and Klara Blaier, 81, both sur-
vived the Holocaust and moved
separately to Israel in 1948,
each unaware the other was alive.

Holocaust survivor sisters reunited

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Two sisters who survived the Holocaust and moved separately to Israel were reunited after 61 years with the help of a high-tech database, a spokeswoman from the Israel Holocaust memorial said Sunday.

Estee Yaari of the Yad Vashem Heroes and Martyrs Memorial Authority said Klara Blaier 81, and Hannah Katz, 78, moved to Israel in 1948, each unaware that the other had survived the Nazi slaying of 6 million Jews during World War II.

Yaari said the two had last seen each other in Hungary in 1944, shortly after their parents sent them from their home in the former Czechoslovakia to live with relatives. The two women could not be reached for comment.

"On Thursday, Hannah Katz's granddaughter was looking for information about Katz's mother on our Internet database," Yaari said. "All of a sudden she discovered that Katz's sister, Klara Blaier, was living about 85 miles away in northern Israel. They were reunited the next day."

Gators are phony

AL HUNTSVILLE — Alligator heads are popping up in the pond at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, but don't worry.

Officials say it's just ducky.

The life-size, urethane-foam alligator heads were being put in the pond to scare away ducks and geese so the growing bird population will not become a health hazard.

The "Gator Guard" from Bird-X Inc. costs \$69 and has reflective orange-yellow eyes that resemble one of the birds' natural predators.

"Our fear is that we'll put them out there and the ducks will figure out they're not a threat," said Marcia Green, director of the UAH office of environmental health and safety.

Good deed gone bad

CO DURANGO — Two teenage girls who surprised their neighbors with homemade cookies late one night were ordered to pay nearly \$900 in medication bills for a woman who says she was so startled that she had to go to the hospital.

Taylor Ostergaard, 17, and Lindsey Jo Zellitti, 18, baked the chocolate chip and sugar cookies one night last July. They made packages with a half-dozen cookies each and added large red or pink construction-paper hearts that carried the message, "Have a great night!" and were signed with their first initials, "Love, The T and L Club."

Wanda Renea Young, 49, said she was at her rural home south of Durango around 10:30 p.m. when she said she saw "shadowy figures" outside the house hanging repeatedly on her door. She yelled, "Who's there?" but no one answered, and the figures ran away.

Frightened, she spent the night at her sister's home, then went to the hospital the next morning because she was still shaking and had an upset stomach.

ID theft charges

VT BURLINGTON — A woman accused of using the Internet to make it appear that she was being harassed has pleaded not guilty to a felony charge of identity theft.

Police officials said Bess Carney, 27, created an e-mail address with a former co-worker's name to send harassing e-mails to herself. She is accused of then forwarding those messages to friends in an attempt to portray the former co-worker, Jeanne Landau, as unstable, according to documents filed in Vermont District Court in Burlington.

Police said Landau had recently begun dating one of Carney's friends.

Carney also was charged with misdemeanors of making false reports to law enforcement and unauthorized access to a computer.

Each misdemeanor carries a maximum punishment of six months in prison and a \$500 fine. The felony charge could lead to as long as three years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Bomb threats continue

GA AUGUSTA — Bomb threats at Glenn Hills Middle School have become so common that some students bring foot-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

balls and playing cards to pass the time during evacuations, police say. More than a dozen threats since the school year began, including seven the week of Jan. 10, have led to three arrests, but the calls continue. Police say the callers sound young and use tricks to evade caller ID.

Education assistance

PA HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency and Gov. Ed Rendell announced that PHEAA will add \$45 million to its need-based college grant program and create a \$10 million grant program for working adults who want to return to school. Earnings from the agency's student-loan programs will fund the expansion.

Windy City tainted

IL CHICAGO — Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley said a series of contracting and police scandals had hurt the city's reputation and brought in a team of managers to help crack down on fraud.

Chicago has a long history of corruption and scandals, but the past few months have been especially bad, with campaign donors, contractors, former city workers and police officers facing federal corruption charges in separate investigations.

"I am concerned that our city's integrity has been harmed, our reputation tarnished," Daley said. "I know that some people think this is just business as usual. That is a very cynical view of government."



In the buckets

Four trucks from Rochester Gas & Electric work on power lines along a road in Canandaigua, N.Y.

It is something I do not accept."

Daley appointed Mary Dempsey, the commissioner of the Chicago Public Library system, to spend six months cleaning out fraud in programs in which city contracts are set aside for companies that are owned and operated by women and minorities. He appointed two former federal prosecutors to work with her.

He also announced that from now on, the city will insist on more information about contractors who seek minority and female set-aside contracts to be sure they "are who they say they are and are doing the work they're paid to do."

Confession to cheating

CO GYPSUM — A high school graduate has confessed to cheating on an English literature test — 47 years ago.

Eagle Valley High School Principal Mark Strakbein said he got a one-page, handwritten letter from a 65-year-old grandmother of five who admitted she and a friend stole the answers to a Shakespeare test in the fall of 1957.

"I know it makes no difference now (after 47 years), except maybe this will keep some student from cheating and help them to be honest — conscience never lets you forget — there is forgiveness with God, and I have that, but I felt I still needed to confess to the school."

Strakbein didn't release the woman's name but said he confirmed she graduated in 1958 from Eagle Valley High.

Strakbein said he read the letter aloud to every homeroom class as a lesson in following your conscience.

Chicago could have heard a pin drop," he said.

Poisonous food chain

CA SIMI VALLEY — The National Park Service says tests showed two mountain lions found in December died of anticoagulant poisoning from the active ingredients in household rat and mice poisons. Officials suspect the lions were poisoned by eating coyotes that had eaten poisoned rats or mice.

Child abuse sentencing

TX HOUSTON — Jurors began considering how a Houston man convicted of the aggravated sexual assault of a 6-week-old baby should be punished.

Keith Samuel Cook was found guilty by a Harris County grand jury of the Feb. 20, 2003, assault. He faces a sentence ranging from probation to life in prison.

When the two-day trial began, Assistant District Attorney Murray Newman told jurors it was one of the most disturbing he's seen.

The child's mother, Eugenia White, 28, has been charged with failure to report child abuse. She had been dating Cook for about six months and prosecutors say she claimed she had accidentally scratched the baby while changing a diaper.

A day after the assault, the infant was taken to a medical center, which rushed her to a children's hospital for surgery.

When doctors and social workers questioned White's story, she blamed Cook.



Bull run

Dwayne Hargo competes in a bull-riding event during the Los Fresnos PRCA Rodeo, held in conjunction with the 16th annual Cameron County Fair and Livestock Show in Los Fresnos, Texas. The PRCA is the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.



Bad slide

Jason Moore tumbles down a sledding hill after he flipped off of his sled during the 68th Annual Laskiniani Festival in Palo, Minn. Despite the spill, Moore was unhurt and climbed back up for another run down the hill.



New England surfing rules

A surfer rides turbulent Atlantic Ocean waves near Jenness Beach in Rye, N.H., during sundown.

A surfer rides turbulent Atlantic Ocean waves



Boarding in the sun

Shelden Waterman practices a jump on his snowboard during the Snowflair event in Ulica, N.Y.



Building blocks

Robbi Fryer, 7, contemplates how high can a tower of Legos go before it topples over as she participates in a construction competition called the Black Kids Building Program in Maple Heights, Ohio.



Lone ranger

Brenda Harris, with the Bexar County Palamino Patrol Drill Team, carries the American flag prior to the matinee performance of the San Antonio Rodeo at the SBC Center in San Antonio.



Beady eyes

Riders in the Krewe of Iris float throw beads to a crowd in New Orleans. Mardi Gras parades and activities are to continue through Fat Tuesday.

Outlaw freed

ID BOISE — Idaho's most infamous outlaw, Claude Dallas, was released from prison after serving 22 years for the execution-style slayings of two state officers in 1981.

Dallas, 54, gained notoriety as a callous criminal and a modern-day mountain man at odds with the government. He was released after his 30-year term was cut by eight years for good behavior.

He was convicted of manslaughter in 1982 for the shooting deaths of Conley Elms and Bill Pogue, officers for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game who were investigating reports of bobcat poaching by Dallas in remote southeast Idaho.

Pogue, who had drawn his own weapon, was hit first with a shot from Dallas' handgun. Dallas then shot Elms two times in the chest before using a rifle to fire one round into each man's head.

The case made national headlines and turned Dallas into an anti-government folk hero for some — a reputation only heightened by a 1986 jailbreak. Dallas hid for nearly a year before he was caught and sent back to prison. He was charged in the escape, but acquitted by a jury after he testified he had to break out because prison guards threatened his life.

Officer resigns

NI FLEMINGTONA — Police officer accused of helping cover up a fatal shooting at the home of former NBA star Jayson Williams entered a program for first-time offenders. Bridgewater Officer Eric Allen, 30, agreed to resign from the department and never work again in law enforcement. He was charged with official misconduct and witness tampering.

Tree disease concerns

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Conditions exist for a Dutch elm emergency in Minneapolis, with high potential for losing more of the leafy urban canopy, officials said.

The cause for concern: Last year, for the first time since the 1970s, Minneapolis saw a near-tripling of public trees afflicted with Dutch elm disease. In an average year, the city targets 1,500 trees on public land for elimination because of the disease, which is caused by a fungus spread by a beetle. Last year the number hit 4,500, said Commissioner John Erwin of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

In all, the city ordered the destruction of 9,914 elms, the third most in a year, behind 1977 and 1978. In 2003 the city ordered fewer than 4,000 destroyed.

"We had such a dramatic boom that we fear for the whole city," Erwin said. "We are doing nothing but cutting down trees, and we can't keep up."

Another bright idea

WV HUNTINGTON — A team of inventors has a bright idea — a better light bulb.

To demonstrate the durability of a new kind of light bulb, Richard Begley tossed one on the ground and dipped another one under water.

"Would you do that with a regular bulb?" the Marshall University

researcher asked.

The U.S. Patent and Trade office recently granted a patent for the solid-state ElectroCerescent lighting technology, which was developed by Begley, an engineering professor; Michael Norton, a chemistry professor; and researchers from Alfred University College of Ceramics in New York and Lewisburg-based Meadow River Enterprises Inc.

The inventors are now entertaining contract offers for commercial applications for the ceramic-on-steel lights, which they say could lead to hundreds of new jobs in West Virginia.

A square foot of the new light panels consumes one-quarter of a watt or power, said Don Osborne, president of Meadow River Enterprises.

Researchers estimate the bulbs can emit their soft greenish light for 50,000 hours — or more than five years — without much maintenance.

Polygamist wants appeal

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Rodney Holm, a former police officer convicted of bigamy and illegal sex with an underage girl, appealed his case to the state Supreme Court. Holm's attorney argued that polygamy is a constitutional right. Holm was found guilty in August 2003 and sentenced to a year in jail. His conviction stemmed from his union with his third wife, who was 16 at the time.

Development near gorge

WV CHARLESTON — A developer wants to build as many as 2,200 homes along a 10-mile stretch of the rim of the scenic New River Gorge, drawing protests from National Park Service officials.

The proposed Roaring River development would cover 4,300 acres on the west side of the deep gorge, northeast of the city of Beckley.

Developers plan homes ranging from small cabins to 3,000-square-foot "mountain estates."

Park service officials are concerned because a 613-acre section the proposed development is on private land within the official boundary of the New River Gorge National River.

Governor knocks \$20M

MO JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Matt Blunt, a strong supporter of tort reform, is calling a \$20 million judgment against Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. an "egregious" example of high payoffs in lawsuits. A Jackson County jury awarded the punitive damages to the family of a deceased smoker. Blunt says such awards are hurting Missouri's business climate.

Gambling on casinos

KS TOPEKA — Gambling lobbyists put forward a new proposal for state-owned casinos. Doug Lawrence, a lobbyist for the Kansas Greyhound Association, told the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee the package could provide the state with as much as \$150 million for education, while tapping into a lucrative tourism industry in the fiscal year starting July 1.

Stories and photos from news wires

FACES

McCartney refutes reports

Stung by media sniping at his wife, Paul McCartney wants to set the record straight. She doesn't make decisions for him, didn't tell him to dye his graying hair, and gets along just fine with his kids.

The former Beatle posted a message Friday on Heather Mills McCartney's official Web site, rebutting some of the "scurrilous reports" about the model-turned anti-landmine campaigner he married in 2002.

"Some of the stuff that is written is plain malevolence but some of it is so ridiculous that I have to admit it's funny," wrote the musician, who headlined the Super Bowl halftime show on Sunday.

Britain's tabloid press has reported animosity between Mills McCartney, 37, and the musician's children from his marriage to Linda McCartney, who died of cancer in 1998.

But McCartney said his adult children "get on great" with their stepmother. He and Mills McCartney have a 1-year-old daughter, Beatrice.

N. Korea wants ban on 'Team America'

North Korea's embassy in Prague has demanded that the film "Team America: World Police" be banned in the Czech Republic, saying the movie harms their country's reputation, a report said Saturday.

In the film by "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, a team of marionettes rushes to keep North Korean leader Kim Jong Il from destroying the world, reducing world capitals to rubble along the way.

"It harms the image of our country," the Lidovce Noviny daily quoted a North Korean diplomat as saying. "Such behavior is not part of our country's political culture. Therefore, we want the film to be banned."

The Czech Foreign Ministry said the film would not be banned in the Czech Republic.

"We told them it's an unrealistic wish," ministry spokesman Vit Kolar was quoted as saying. "Obviously, it's absurd to demand that in a democratic country."

Freeman picks sweet home Mississippi

Morgan Freeman has an easy answer when people ask why he chose to live in Mississippi: "I'm a major, internationally famous motion picture star. I can live where I want to."

Freeman, who has appeared in more than 50 films and has been nominated for four Academy Awards, grew up in Mississippi but left the area in 1955.

"I had no plans to come back here," Freeman said this past week as he was added to the Leflore County Hall of Fame. "I was just going to keep going."

Freeman was drawn back by his parents and returned to live in Charleston in 1992. When he returned, he remembered why the place felt right.

"All my life, I felt nurtured because I was here," he said.

"I was raised by a white village, and I feel blessed for that."

Actor says goodbye to 'JAG'

David James Elliott is ending his "JAG" service after a decade.

Elliott, who plays military attorney Cmdr. Harmon "Harm" Rabb Jr., will leave the CBS series when it concludes its 10th season in May, the network said Friday.

With his "JAG" deal ending this year, Elliott signed a series development deal with ABC and Touchstone Television.

Whether the Navy drama, which first aired on NBC and moved to CBS in its second year, will return for the 2005-06 season was uncertain.

"JAG" creator Donald Bellisario is introducing a new character who could fill the void left by Elliott: Chris Beetem, formerly of "As the World Turns," joins the cast this month as a new JAG team member.

The series, which airs Friday, co-stars Catherine Bell, Patrick Labyorteaux, Scott Lawrence and Zoe McLellan.

Stories and photos from the Associated Press

Rock

Comedian

rolls into Oscar gig

BY BETH HARRIS

The Associated Press

Chris Rock's eyes darted around the room, studying the chattering group of international film journalists.

He licked his lips, clasped his hands... and only dropped one F-bomb as they questioned him in a variety of accents.

"I'm never proper or careful, but I never curse in front of my mother, either," Rock told the writers. So he's not worried about getting beeped on worldwide TV when he hosts the Feb. 27 Oscar ceremony.

"I don't think people are nervous," Rock said later during an interview with The Associated Press. "I just came off tour in America, a million people came to see me. They weren't nervous."

Shooting a glance at Oscar show producer Gil Cates, he asked, "Are you, Gil?" Cates didn't flinch.

Neither has the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, although having the acerbic Rock as host is certainly a change of pace. The academy is known for its sedate style and the predominantly older, white membership that fills the Oscar night audience.

Rock mimicked the typical question he gets these days: "Oh, a black comic, how are you going to make it white?" He liked, "Dude, look around, can you get any whiter?"

He honed his off-the-cuff style during a three-year run on "Saturday Night Live," plus the club circuit and hit HBO specials.

"How do I say this without sounding like an egomaniac?" he said. "I don't know a comedian that sells more seats than me in the red states and blue states, so I don't see where I have to change that much."

At least some of Rock's cockiness stems from the positive response he received during his recent "Black Ambition" tour.

"When I'm in West Palm Beach, Fla., there are old Jewish people at the show," he said.

"When I'm in New Mexico, it's Mexicans."

"Wherever I'm at, the people show up."

Hip-hopping into the traditional footsteps of such Oscar emcees as Billy Crystal and the late Johnny Carson appealed to Rock, although he revealed he turned down the chance to host the Oscars several times before, believing it was "an old man's gig."

But he's 39 now, and it feels right.

"I like the tradition of the Oscars," he said. "I like that some of the greatest comedians ever have hosted the show."

How did Cates choose Rock as host? "Billy is doing a show in New York," he said, "Steve Martin is doing a movie — 'Rock cut him off.' 'Ellen DeGeneres has crabs. Jay Leno's got a gut. They go to the R's. But Reynolds said no."

Creating an immediate buzz on Oscar night is Rock's No. 1 challenge.

"A great monologue does it," he said. "The secret to hosting awards shows is like sports — get a big lead and run out



Comedian and actor Chris Rock speaks with journalists about hosting the 77th Annual Academy Awards on Jan. 21 during a news conference in Burbank, Calif. Having the acerbic Rock as host is a change of pace for the academy, known for its sedate style.

the clock.

"Then kind of hand off the ball and assist the show," as a kid in Brooklyn, N.Y., Rock tuned in the Oscar show for the host's monologue, then tuned out.

"Any black people nominated? No, oh, back to bed," he said.

Not the case this year. Jamie Foxx is a best actor nominee for "Ray" and a supporting actor nominee for "Collateral" — two of this year's record five acting nominations for black performers.

"If he doesn't win, I will steal the sound editing Oscar," Rock declared.

Cates reminded him that award usually has multiple winners.

"They're all punks," Rock shot back.

Rock isn't a member of the academy, despite acting in "Head of State," "Bad Company," "New Jack City," "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka!" and, of course, "Pootie Tang."

Why not? "If you're darker than a paper bag, you can't get in," he said.

Working a live audience is Rock's forte, a good thing since the Oscars are broadcast in real time around the world. ABC has not yet decided whether there will be a delay on the broadcast to protect against stray profanities, as there was in last year's post-Janet Jackson crackdown.

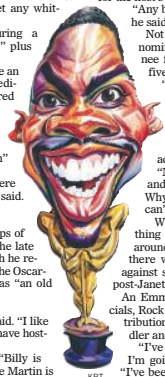
An Emmy-winning writer himself for his cable specials, Rock hired his own writing staff, and expects contributions from famous pals David Spade, Adam Sandler and Eddie Murphy.

"I've been kidding [explosive] for years and now I'm going to reap the rewards," he said, cackling.

"I've been paying for a lot of dinners and now I want jokes, damn it!"

How will Rock know if he's killing the Kodak Theatre audience on Oscar night? "I'll probably pay more attention to the musicians in the pit than the stars because they're the closest you're going to get to normal people in the audience," he said.

"If I can get them laughing, I know I got the whole world laughing."



Archaeologist seeks sleeping Buddha

Huge statue described in old writings may be buried in Afghanistan

BY MARC KAUFMAN

The Washington Post

The world looked on helplessly four years ago as Islamic zealots destroyed two enormous standing Buddha statues overlooking Afghanistan's Bamiyan Valley, but recent explorations at the ancient site have led researchers to conclude that all may not have been lost.

A third, much larger statue — a 1,000-foot-long sleeping Buddha — may still be buried nearby.

Inspired by the writings of a Chinese pilgrim almost 1,400 years ago, Afghanistan's foremost archaeologist is leading a dig within view of the cliff walls where the two Buddhas once stood. The initial goal is to find an ancient monastery that the Chinese traveler Xuanzang described around A.D. 630, and then the gigantic reclining Buddha that he said was inside its walls.

Although some promising discoveries have been made in the past two years, archaeologists do not really know what they might find beneath the cliffs. But the leader of the dig, Zemaaryalai Tarzi, is optimistic that important discoveries lie under the soil, and he will return to Bamiyan this summer to continue the excavation.

If it is there, Tarzi and others say, the statue would be a major archaeological treasure and would help restore the Bamiyan Valley to the top ranks of world heritage sites.

"If indeed Xuanzang's tales are true," Tarzi says, he is digging for "the largest reclining statue ever made in the artistic world."

Because the pilgrim was remarkably accurate in describing the gigantic size and location of the two standing Buddhas, Tarzi says there is good reason to believe his account of the reclining Buddha, as well.

To some, the search is a quixotic one. If the ancient Chinese pilgrim is to be believed, the sleeping Buddha is almost as long as the Eiffel Tower is tall. How could such a monumental structure disappear underground, some ask, and how could it be salvaged if it still exists? Tarzi has possible answers: The statue could have been deliberately buried centuries ago by devotees to protect it from invading Muslim armies, or it could have been covered after a major earthquake. But more important, his team has begun uncovering at the site clay figures and sophisticated structures that lend support to his grand theory.

Last summer, the dig uncovered a wall that Tarzi is convinced is part of the ancient monastery that housed the huge statue. Excavators have also discovered several dozen sculptures of Buddha heads and other statue fragments, some dating to as far back as the 3rd century — when Bamiyan was growing as a Buddhist center. At the very end of the digging season, Tarzi found evidence as well of what he believes may be part of a huge statue foot.

He is aware of the professional skepticism surrounding his quest — some have said the reported size of the structure has been misunderstood, while others suggest the reclining "statue" may have been an outcropping of rock that reminded the religious of a sleeping Buddha — but he insists the evidence is clear.

He says that some of his colleagues hesitate regarding the length of the reclining Buddha statue," Tarzi said in an e-mail. "Our only source of information comes from the testimony by Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, all versions and copies of his traveling accounts, the length of the large reclining statue is 1,000 feet long."



AP photos

Above: One of Afghanistan's ancient treasures and believed to be the world's tallest standing Buddha, in Bamiyan, northern Afghanistan, this statue and another like it were blasted into tiny pieces by the former Taliban regime. Right top: They left enormous holes in the mountainside. The Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban were part of a large network of smaller temples built into the side of the mountain around 1,500 years ago. Recent explorations at the site have led researchers to conclude that a third, much larger statue — a 1,000-foot-long sleeping Buddha — may still be buried nearby. Inspired by the writings of a Chinese pilgrim almost 1,400 years ago, Afghanistan's foremost archaeologist is leading a dig within view of the cliff walls where the two Buddhas once stood.

The work is sufficiently tantalizing that the government of France and the National Geographic Society have funded Tarzi's efforts, and the dig will be featured on a National Geographic television special later this year.

After problems with a local warlord stopped work several summers ago, Afghan President Hamid Karzai gave his formal approval for the dig and has helped supply 24-hour security for the site.

Afghanistan is overwhelmingly Muslim now, but for centuries it had a flourishing Buddhist culture, and one of its highest expressions was at Bamiyan — a fertile valley high in the Hindu Kush.

Researchers believe Bamiyan, once a way station along the Silk Road between China and the Middle East, was home to monasteries housing as many as 5,000 monks at its zenith in the A.D. 500s and 600s. They

also believe Bamiyan was the site of some of the first statues to ever show the face of Buddha, who had previously been represented as a footprint or an umbrella. The Greek influence introduced earlier by Alexander the Great met the growing popularity of Buddhism and flowered into the massive Buddha sculptures of Bamiyan.

By the 10th century, the area had converted to Islam, which generally views human representations as idolatry, but for centuries afterward the Bamiyan Buddhas remained a central and widely embraced part of Afghan heritage and culture. While several earlier rulers considered the statues sacrilegious and inflicted minor damage, only the Taliban and al-Qaida took concerted action to destroy them.

In March 2001, they used artillery, bombs and ultimately dynamite over several days to bring the statues down.



Tarzi actually began his quest for the sleeping Buddha well before the Taliban came into the world, even before his homeland began its descent into war and chaos in the late 1970s. He oversaw earlier efforts to repair and stabilize the standing Buddhas — which were more than 170 and 120 feet high, respectively — and was well aware of the report by the Chinese monk Xuanzang of the reclining Buddha. But he did not feel any real urgency back then, believing he would have decades to work on the ancient wonders of Bamiyan.

Instead, he fled Afghanistan with his family in 1979, and lived, studied and taught archaeology in France for more than 20 years. He did not return to his country until 2002, after the huge niches cut into the cliffs that face the town of Bamiyan had been emptied of their ancient treasures. Less well known is that the Taliban and looters also stripped ancient frescos and other artwork from hundreds of rooms and corridors dug into the cliffs alongside the giant Buddhas.

Tarzi has no illusions about what condition the reclining Buddha will be in if he finds it. Reclining or sleeping Buddhas — created to represent the Buddha as he prepared to enter nirvana — are generally in close contact with soil and mud. In addition, it was most likely made of mud and plaster and would have degraded significantly below ground.

But discovering a pristine, gold-covered statue was never the hope.

Rather, Tarzi's goal is to uncover and highlight the archaeological importance of a site many thought had been destroyed forever.

"The Bamiyan Valley was one of the most important places along the Silk Road and is just filled with undiscovered finds," said archaeologist Fredrik Hiebert, a National Geographic Fellow and expert on the region. "Whether Tarzi uncovers this particular statue is important, but there's a lifetime worth of other discoveries waiting in Bamiyan, too."

Horoscope

It's Mardi Gras, a holiday believed to have ancient roots in some sort of intercalary season, in other words, inserted in a year to make a lunar calendar sync up with a solar calendar. These added days seemed to exist outside of time and therefore were seen as an opportunity to abandon protocol and simply go wild.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(February 8). There's a paradox at work this year: The more independent and self-sufficient you become, the more you are supported in your endeavors. Quick business wins are featured through the spring, but spend wisely, or you experience financial losses. A fabulous June vacation progresses your love life. For new romances, Virgo and Taurus are terrific.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Your curiosity is piqued. Fascinating characters cross your path, and there's talk of changes on the horizon. Instead of being fearful, be on the cutting edge by conducting an interview of someone who seems to know what's going on.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

The more interest you show in a subject or a person, the more interesting that subject or person becomes. It may feel like you're still getting to know someone who's been in your life for years.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

A loving partner is just what you need to ground you. Together, you find solutions for today's strange and random problems. Laughter makes it all better, too. If you're single, a Virgo or Capricorn friend will be your anchor.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

The obstacles you build in your mind have nothing to do with reality. This is especially true in reference to a central relationship. In actuality, one courageous phone call could solve everything.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

The world may be in disarray. It's not the world's fault. Rather, it's our way of

mentally ordering information that makes it confusing. Get clarity by removing yourself from the muddle to look at things from another point of view.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

The stars whisper to you — pause to listen. They say things like "Be careful not to fall in love with someone's potential."

You are observant and willing to see things how they are now instead of how they ought to be.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You feel that if you hesitate, you'll lose out. The reality is that if you hesitate, you'll be dragged along a rocky path behind the rest. So it's time to jump in on your own two feet and run forward.

SAGITTARIUS (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your impressions are accurate as usual, but the differing opinions of those around you may knock you off your center. Approach new relationships with caution. The first 15 minutes determine how the rest will go.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your impressions are accurate as usual, but the differing opinions of those around you may knock you off your center. Approach new relationships with caution. The first 15 minutes determine how the rest will go.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your physical body is strongly affected by thoughts now. Look in the mirror, and give yourself the nod of approval or, better yet, a pep talk. This will noticeably improve your health.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're like a detective, ferreting out the true motivations of others — seemingly illogical behaviors are clever disguises that you see right through. Use what you know to find true-blue friends.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Take nothing out of context. Each event is connected to the one before it and will affect the one after it. Your sliding sense of the past, present and future will guide you toward success.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Money is just money, so put those worries in their proper perspective and realize what the real issue is — priorities. If you can imagine something you'd rather be doing, then perhaps it's time to do that instead.

Creators Syndicate

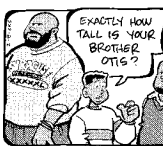
Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



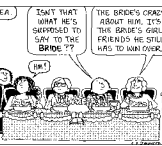
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



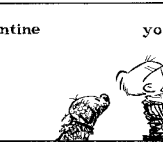
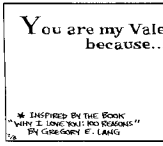
Hi and Lois



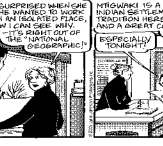
Beetle Bailey



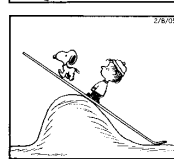
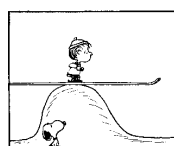
Red Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



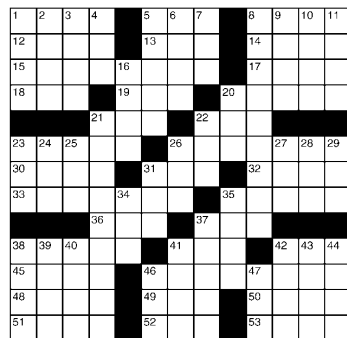
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Support
- 5 Accomplished
- 8 California wine valley
- 12 Guru's discipline
- 13 Whatever number
- 14 Individuals
- 15 Region of France
- 17 Second in command
- 18 — out a living
- 19 — "Robinson"
- 20 Orange and Rose
- 21 Coquettish
- 22 Spasm
- 23 Slate user's need
- 26 Outre
- 30 Commanded
- 31 Little Lab
- 32 Picture in pixels
- 33 Catches some zzzs
- 35 Makes like a rodent
- 36 Torched
- 37 Sales pitch?
- 38 Ort
- 41 Tank fill
- 42 Firmament
- 45 Siamese, now
- 46 De Havilland's sister
- 48 Have coming
- 49 Raw rock
- 50 Earth mover?
- 51 Arboretum specimen
- 52 Solidify
- 53 AAA tasks

Down

- 1 Nabors' role
- 2 Castle
- 3 Shrek is one
- 4 Standard
- 5 Supermarket section
- 6 Hostels
- 7 Coloring agent
- 8 Local anesthetic
- 9 From square one
- 10 Rid of rind
- 11 Venomous vipers
- 16 Beyond control
- 20 Occupation, for short
- 21 British chanteuse
- 22 Lagniappe
- 23 A network
- 24 Solo of "Star Wars"
- 25 Commotion

26 Kramden's

transport

27 1980s GE

acquisition

28 Paddle

31 Favorite

32 Speed along

35 Heart of the

matter

37 "Crossfire" group

38 Undo a dele

40 Exceptional

41 Former weep

42 Missile shelter

43 Recognize

44 Evergreen trees

45 Visibility

46 hindrance

47 Suitable

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-8

CRYPTOQUIP

NGLU JIYSUM EY Q GKZZKZ

VJKZI, IKE XEVJU'J PKZMLJ

JK QFFKN PKZ Q XQZMSU

KP J.LZZKZ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I BEGAN COLLECTING BREATH-FRESHENER WRAPPERS, I'D WANT THEM IN MINT CONDITION.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals R

The tale of the lady and the tramp

Dear Abby: In 1964, I read a column of your mother's that hit home with me. It was about a man leaving his wife, a lady, for a tramp. I was enduring a similar situation at that time, and my mother cut the column out and gave it to me to comfort me. The clipping, now fragile and yellowed with age, was a contributing factor in my healing.

Now I'd like to do the same for others who are experiencing my pain. There appears to be an epidemic of spousal infidelity here.

It would help them if you would reprint that article.

Curiosity prompts me to inquire whether professionals were consulted regarding that inspired response. Would you please consider printing it again?

— **Longtime Reader**

In New York

Dear Longtime Reader: No professional was consulted; my mother was a woman of great insight. The letter first appeared

in 1964. It is one of my favorites, and I'm pleased to reprint it. Read on:

Dear Abby: Why will a married man pick up a tramp and treat her like a lady, then turn around and treat his wife (who is a lady) like a tramp?

Dear Abby



— **Minnie**
Dear Minnie: A man picks up a tramp because he wants a female companion who is no better than he is. In her company, he doesn't feel inferior. He rewards her by treating her like a lady.

"He treats his wife (who is a lady) like a tramp because she feels that by degrading her, he will bring her down to his level. This makes him feel guilty, so to get even with his wife for making him feel guilty, he keeps right on punishing her."

Years later, a reader asked, "What is the difference between a lady and a tramp?" Mother

was stumped, so she asked the readers for their input. Their answers were enlightening—and reviewing them is like looking into a time capsule.

"The difference between a lady and a tramp? About three drinks."

— **Tends Bar in Milwaukee**

"A lady goes out, goes home and goes to bed. A tramp goes out, goes to bed, then goes home."

— **Murph**

"There's no difference. Kipling said, 'The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skin.'"

— **F.C.H. in Texarkana**

"The difference between a lady and a tramp is men with big mouths."

— **Met a Few**

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6440, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter for each square, to form four ordinary words.

BYGUL

THICY

LEVET

NULDOA

ANS: THE

TO

ANS: ENACT DAISY GARISH KITTEN

ANS: WHAT MOM GAVE WHEN SHE FORGOT TO HAW DINNER — ICY STARES

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argilione



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ENACT DAISY GARISH KITTEN
Answer: What Mom gave when she forgot to haw dinner — ICY STARES

Divorce never easy for families

Dear Annie: Because you offer reasonable and caring solutions, I want to ask your opinion about this problem. My son and his wife, the parents of a 4-year-old girl, divorced recently.

Although the mother suffers from mental illness, the judge placed the little girl with her mom, with the understanding that the mother would receive regular medication monitoring and outpatient therapy, which she had not sought during the prior 17 months. The judge ordered that my son would be allowed to have frequent and liberal visitation with his daughter.

The problem is that one month later, the mother is already manipulating the situation and refusing visits to my son. It is extremely frustrating that she is allowed to get away with noncompliance and not putting the best interests of their daughter before her own desire to punish my son. My ex-daughter-in-law was the

Annie's Mailbox



one who wanted out of the marriage, and she is the one who moved away. Is there any way for my little granddaughter to win?

— **Hurting Grandma**
Dear Grandma: It's terribly sad when divorced parents cannot put the needs of their children first, but it is a common problem. If your ex-daughter-in-law is not complying with a court order, your son should speak to his attorney and see that the matter is brought up in court as soon as possible.

Encourage your son not to give up on his daughter, no matter how difficult his ex-wife makes things, and to keep on top of the situation to be sure his daughter remains safe.

Dear Annie: Whenever my father comes over to our house for a family get-together, he immediately sits down and turns on the television. He doesn't get along well with any other mem-

bers of the family and resorts to watching TV as an excuse not to make conversation.

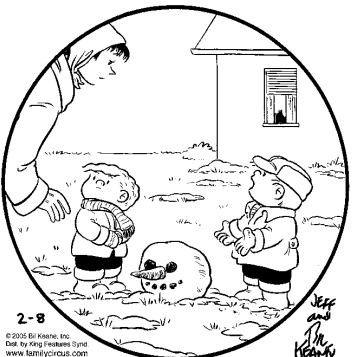
I talked to Dad about this last night, and he said if I can't put up with his TV watching, I shouldn't invite him to these informal parties. Annie, I really love my father, but he's putting me...

— **Between a Rock and a Hard Place in Missouri**

Dear Rock: If you're asking us if Dad is making the answer is yes. If you're asking what you can do about it, your father already has provided the answer. Since he doesn't get along with any other family members, it's quite an indication of his love for you that he bothers to show up at these events. Either let him watch TV in peace, or invite him over when you don't have other company.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of Ann Landers' column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



2-8
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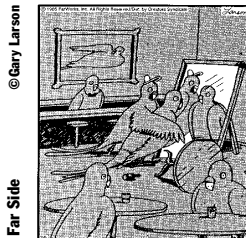
"There wasn't enough snow to give him a body."



Dennis the Menace

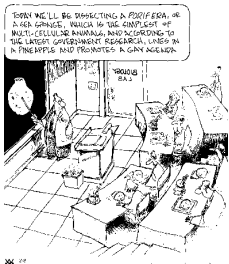


"So, is this story supposed to make me fall asleep before the ending, or you?"



"Whoa, back off, Bobby Joe... That's just your reflection."

Non Sequitur



Mickelson wins FBR with largest margin

BY BOB BAUM

The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Phil Mickelson had an awful start in the FBR Open. He was 4 over after nine holes, 2 over after 18. Just making the cut seemed a reasonable goal.

What followed was a masterful, dominating performance that gave the Masters champion his first victory of the year, a five-stroke triumph that was the biggest winning margin in his impressive PGA Tour career.

"I thought it was going to be a short week, I'd have the weekend off," Mickelson said, "and the next thing you know I was able to turn things around."

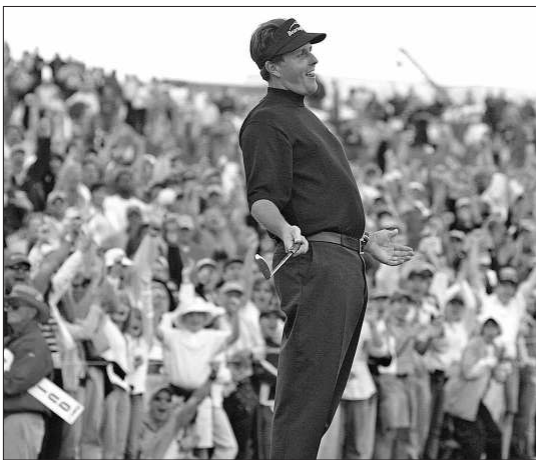
That's an understatement. Mickelson was 19 under over the final 54 holes. The comeback began with an 11-under 60 in the second round, followed by a 65, and capped by a 67 on Sunday. As a finishing touch, he rolled in a 25-foot putt from the fringe on the 18th for a birdie, to the wild cheers of a huge crowd that had showed him with encouragement all week.

"I can't wait for next week," said Mickelson, looking forward to the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. "I can't wait to get back on the golf course. I'm excited about hitting chips, or putts, or tee shots."

Mickelson said he's playing the best golf of his life, that his switch to new golf equipment has added distance to his drives.

Those drives were a bit wild Sunday, when he hit one deep into the desert and another into a pond. But the 24-time PGA Tour winner offset those mistakes with brilliant comeback shots. He turned the desert mishap into a birdie, and salvaged a par out of the water.

Afterward, his daughters,



Phil Mickelson reacts to his birdie putt on the 18th green during the final round of the FBR Open at the Tournament Players Club in Scottsdale, Ariz. Mickelson won the tournament at 17 under par.

5-year-old Amanda and 3-year-old Sophia, rushed to hug their dad on the 18th green.

"Daddy, there's treats after," the youngest one said.

The victory in the \$5.2 million event was worth \$936,000. The best-attended tournament on the PGA Tour drew an estimated 517,000.

Mickelson accomplished his victory in an uncharacteristic

way, tied for the lead after two rounds and up by four shots going into the final day.

"It was a fun week," he said, "because I drove the ball a lot longer than I think I have in years, and was able to have a lot of short irons, too."

With chants of "A-S-U!!" and "Go Lefty!" from the crowd everywhere he went, Mickelson finished at 17-under 267 on the Tour-

nameat Players Club course.

Scott McCarron and Kevin Nale, the alter, at 21, the youngest player, on the PGA Tour, tied at 272. McCarron shot his second consecutive 65, and Nale had a 69. Nale played in the final group with Mickelson and faltered before rallying with birdies on the 14th and 17th for his best finish in two years on the tour.

Steve Flesch, Tim Herron and

David Toms finished at 273. Toms would have finished in second place but double-bogeyed the 18th.

Mickelson, a three-time NCAA champion at Arizona State who lived in Scottsdale until December 2001, won the FBR — formerly the Phoenix Open — for the second time. He was just 25 when he won in a playoff with Justin Leonard in 1994.

The par-5 13th might have been the clincher for Mickelson. His drive sailed off to the right, into desert terrain amid rocks, small trees and cactus. But the ball landed in a spot where there was an opening, and Mickelson smashed a 5-iron shot some 230 yards over a small tree and just in front of the green. He barely missed from there, then tapped in for a birdie. Nale, meanwhile, three-putted for a bogey.

"I was thinking, 'This is my chance. I can make a three-shot swing here if I make eagle and he makes bogey,'" Nale said. "It was the other way around."

Then on the par-5 15th, Mickelson drove into the water, but came back to save par.

"I certainly got up and down a lot," he said. "It's nice to have a short game to fall back on if I'm not hitting it the best. I probably didn't strike it nearly as well today as I did the last couple of days, but the score was OK. All I wanted to do was get the 'W' and I did that."

Nale, born in South Korea, moved with his family to the United States at age 8. He turned professional at 17, before his senior year in high school, and made a spot on the PGA Tour in the 2003 qualifying tournament. He knew the value gained in playing the final two rounds in the same group as Mickelson.

"That experience," Nale said. "You can't buy that."

Canseco claims in book that he gave McGwire steroids

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Canseco says in his upcoming book that he injected Mark McGwire with steroids and introduced several other sluggers to the drugs, the Daily News reported Sunday.

The long-awaited "Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids,' Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big" is scheduled for release by Regan Books on Feb. 21. Regan publisher Paul Oleskiw told The Associated Press in an e-mail that the release date could be moved up.

Parent company HarperCollins posted a book description on its Web site that said Canseco "made him-of-a guinea pig of the performance-enhancing drugs" and added the 1988 AL MVP "mixed, matched and experimented to such a degree that he became known throughout the league as 'The Chemical'."

The Daily News did not quote from the book and said it was still being edited. The newspaper would not say how it got the information.

Canseco did not respond to an e-mail from AP.

Canseco said he, McGwire and Jason Giambi shot steroids together in the bathroom stall at the Oakland Coliseum, the

Sports briefs

Daily News reported. McGwire has always denied using steroids.

"I have always told the truth and I am saddened I continue to

face this line of questioning," McGwire told the newspaper.

Canseco said he introduced Texas teammates Rafael Palmeiro, Ivan Rodriguez and Juan Gonzalez to steroids after being traded to the Rangers in 1992.

"Neither our current owner, general manager and manager were with the Rangers then," Texas spokesman Gregg Elkin said. "The Rangers continue to support baseball's initiative to get steroids out of the game."

Canseco also said President Bush, the Rangers' general managing partner at the time, must have known about the steroid use.

White House spokesman Trent Duffy did not specifically address Canseco's assertion, but said Sunday that Bush's position on steroids "has been known for some time," noting that he condemned the drugs in his 2004 State of the Union address.

A few years ago, Canseco claimed that 80 percent of major leaguers had taken steroids. Last spring, he said: "I think the num-

bers may have changed. Who knows? Maybe the numbers have diminished."

Canseco hit 462 home runs in a major league career from 1985 to 2001.

Baseball recently adopted a tougher steroid-testing program after the sport came under increased scrutiny about the drugs. Barry Bonds, Gary Sheffield and Giambi testified before a federal grand jury investigating the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative known as BALCO.

D-backs acquire Cruz from Devil Rays

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Devil Rays traded outfielder Jose Cruz Jr. and cash to the Arizona Diamondbacks on Sunday for left-hander Casey Fossum, then agreed to a one-year contract that guarantees the pitcher \$1.05 million.

In addition, Tampa Bay agreed to a \$1.3 million, one-year deal with free-agent first baseman Travis Lee.

Cruz hit .242 with 21 home runs and 78 RBIs for the Devil Rays last season. He has 175 homers and 535 RBIs during eight seasons with Seattle, Toronto, San Francisco and Tampa Bay.

Cruz won a Gold Glove with the Giants in 2003, but is also remembered for his dropped fly ball in the 11th inning of Game 3 of the division series against Florida. The

error allowed the Marlins to rally for a 4-3 victory on their way to the World Series.

Fossum joined the Diamondbacks last offseason as the left prospect in the trade that sent Curt Schilling to Boston. The lefty started 27 games for Arizona, going 4-15 with a 6.65 ERA. He struck out 117 and walked 63 in 142 innings.

Fossum, eligible for salary arbitration for the first time, agreed to a contract that calls for a \$950,000 salary this year.

Wie to play in Women's British Open

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland — Michelle Wie will play in the Women's British Open, the Ladies Golf Union said Monday.

The 15-year-old Wie accepted a special exception from the LGU to play at the July 28-31 event at Royal Birkdale.

"We have followed Michelle's development over the last two years with great interest and admiration and in particular her performance in major championships," LGU chief executive Andy Salmon said. "We have no doubt that she is ready to compete with the world's best players at Royal Birkdale."

Wie is one of five amateurs given exemptions to appear in the 144-player field.

Corey Dillon picks up a nickname to savor

Ex-malcontent with Cincinnati becomes a team player with N.E.

By FRED GOODALL
The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Selfish. Malcontent. Troublemaker. Corey Dillon has heard all the critical words used to describe him during seven productive but mostly unfulfilling years in Cincinnati.

After one season with the New England Patriots, he's added a more appealing moniker.

"They can call me whatever they want to. Right now I am a Super Bowl champion," Dillon said after Sunday night's 24-21 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles.

Labeled a bad teammate with the Bengals, Dillon proved his critics wrong this season by being a perfect fit for a New England team that has thrived on unselfishness while becoming the second franchise to win three Super Bowls in four years.

While many questioned the wisdom of trading for Dillon during the offseason, the eight-year pro never considered the possibility he and the Patriots might not be a good match.

Dillon set out quietly to repair his reputation, and wound up posting team-record and career-high 1,635 yards rushing. He had his part against the Eagles too, gaining 75 yards on 18 carries and scoring on a 2-yard run.

The seven-time, 1,000-yard rusher also had three receptions for 31 yards.

"This is what I came here for,"



New England's Corey Dillon scores on a 2-yard run in the fourth quarter despite the best efforts of Philadelphia Eagles free safety Brian Dawkins.

Dillon said, struggling to find the words to describe his feelings.

"I really hasn't hit me yet. Maybe in a couple of days. ... It has been a long, long time since I felt like this. I have been in a lot of championship games from Pop Warner to junior college to high school, and never won the big game. Tonight, we won the big one."

Dillon rushed for over 100 yards in nine of 15 regular season games he played. He averaged 4.2 yards per carry against the Eagles, combining with backup

Kevin Faulk (eight carries, 38 yards) to give the Patriots just enough of a running attack to take some of the pressure off quarterback Tom Brady.

"I'm so happy for him," said Patriots safety Rodney Harrison, who sealed the victory with an interception.

Dillon earned the nickname "Clock-Killin' Dillon" when he ran for 144 yards in New England's second-round playoff victory over Indianapolis. He didn't dominate the Super Bowl, but his TD finished a long drive that

snapped a 14-14 tie less than 2 minutes into the fourth quarter.

"I was thinking we need some more points. They (Philadelphia) are a threat to score at any time. The only thing that was on my mind was trying to get the points to help the team win," said Dillon, who'd never appeared in a playoff game before this season.

The 30-year-old said all he needed was the right situation to break out the best in him.

"God put me in a good place and surrounded me with good people. This whole thing has been

a true blessing. ... This is what it is all about," Dillon said.

"I had fun. For the first time in my career, I enjoyed every minute of the season. To actually come here and be the Super Bowl champions is awesome."

Somebody asked where he was a year ago, when the Patriots were winning the second of their three titles as he finished one of the most frustrating seasons of his career.

"I was on the couch, probably bloated," the 225-pound running back said. "A year makes a tremendous difference."

Super Bowl records

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Records set or tied in the 2005 Super Bowl:

Individual records set
Most Wins, Four-Year Span, Head Coach — 3, Bill Belichick, New England
Most Punt Returns, Career — 8, Troy Brown, New England (8, by eight plays)

Records Tied
Most Receptions, Game — 11, Deion Branch, New England (Dan Ross, Cincinnati vs. San Francisco, 1982; Jerry Rice, San Francisco vs. Cincinnati, 1989)
Most Field Goal Attempts, Career — 6, Adam Vinatieri, New England (Jim Turner, N.Y. Jets; Denver: Ray Gertsch, Pittsburgh; Rich Karlis, Denver; Jeff Wilkins, St. Louis)

Team records set
Fewest Rushing Attempts, Game, Both Teams — 1, New England (20 vs. Philadelphia) (17) (Previous record: 47, St. Louis vs. New England, 1992)
Fewest Rushing Yards, Game, Both Teams — 32, New England (12) vs. Philadelphia (43) (Previous record: 158, New England (43) vs. Green Bay (115), 1997)

Records Tied
Most Wins, Four-Year Span — 3, New England (Dallas 1992-1994)
Most Consecutive Games Won — 2, New England (Green Bay 1992-94, Miami 1993-94, Pittsburgh 1995-96 and 1997-98, San Francisco 1999-04, Dallas 1999-04, Denver 1998-99)

Records Tied
Fewest Field Goal Attempts, Both Teams — 1, New England (1) vs. Philadelphia (0) Miami vs. Minnesota, 1974; San Francisco vs. Denver, 1990
Most Points in a Game, Both Teams — 32, New England (14) vs. Philadelphia (18), Dallas vs. San Francisco, 1995
Most Completions, Game, Both Teams — 33, New England (23) vs. Philadelphia (30) Miami vs. San Francisco, 1985)

Pats' Crennel goes from top to bottom

By TOM WITHERS

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — From dynasty to disaster. Romeo Crennel is going from one NFL extreme to the other.

Shortly after helping New England win its third NFL title in four years, the Patriots defensive coordinator accepted an offer to coach the Cleveland Browns, a change to advance that he once worried would never come.

"I've been in this business for a little while," Crennel said after the Patriots beat Philadelphia 24-21 to seal a place among the league's best teams ever. "I've always been told if you work hard and you're good at what you do, you'll get an opportunity to move up."

Crennel's agent, Joe Linta, said Browns president John Collins called him "about two minutes" after the game to offer the 57-year-old Crennel, a five-time Super Bowl winner, his first head coaching job.

"He has accepted, pending us



Romeo Crennel

working out a contract," Linta said from Jacksonville, Fla. "Hopefully, we can get it done quickly and he can begin putting together a staff."

Linta was scheduled to be in Cleveland on Monday for con-

tract talks. As long as things go well, the Browns will introduce Crennel as their 11th full-time coach — and first black coach.

Linta said he will seek a five- or six-year deal.

"He's not like most first-time coaches," Linta said. "He's a guy with more credentials. Although he hasn't been a head coach, he has five Super Bowl rings. The Browns aren't just getting a coach, they're buying into a program. They are getting 25 years of experience and knowledge."

Crennel's move to Cleveland is no surprise. It had been expected for weeks, and was only delayed because the Browns weren't allowed to have contact with the 24-year NFL coaching veteran while the Patriots were still playing in the playoffs.

The Browns are hoping Crennel can bring them back to glory, but there's much work to be done.

Crennel, who began his pro coaching career on Ray Perkins' staff with the New York Giants in 1981, will be Cleveland's third coach since 1999, when the

Browns returned to the league as an expansion team.

Since then, the club has gone just 30-67 and lost its only playoff game in 2002. Last year, Cleveland went 4-12. The lone bit of decent news to come out of that woe-filled season: The Browns will have the third pick in April's draft.

This will be Crennel's second stint with the Browns. He was the club's defensive coordinator in 2000 under Chris Palmer, who was fired after going just 5-7 in two years. In Crennel's one season in charge of Cleveland's defense, the Browns had 42 sacks, an improvement of 17 over the previous year.

Before hiring Butch Davis in 2001, the Browns interviewed Crennel, who was a candidate for other openings the past few years but was passed over despite his success and a handful of Super Bowl rings.

He emerged as the Browns' No. 1 candidate in Jan. 7 interview with owner Randy Lerner, Collins and general manager Phil Savage.

Genius, guru, winner

Belichick's third Super Bowl victory in four years moves him alongside Gibbs, Walsh and Lombardi

BY JIMMY GOLEN
The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Master of details, a football genius, Patriots coach Bill Belichick didn't start off too well in the Super Bowl. He jogged to the wrong sideline before the game.

That was just about the only mistake he made.

"He's a guru, man," linebacker Roman Phifer said Sunday night after Belichick guided New England to a 24-21 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles for its third NFL title in four years. "He loves the game — he eats, breathes and sleeps the game. He doesn't leave anything out."

The victory was Belichick's ninth straight in the postseason and it gave him a career playoff record of 10-1, the best in NFL history, surpassing Vince Lombardi. Commissioner Paul Tagliabue made note of the accomplishment when handing Belichick the championship trophy named for the late Green Bay Packers coach.

"I expect that he would have deep admiration for the way you play," Tagliabue told Belichick.

Is Belichick's third Super Bowl title as a coach, joining Washington's Joe Gibbs and San Francisco's Bill Walsh and just one behind the four Chuck Noll won in Pittsburgh. Like them, Belichick can now claim to be leader of a football dynasty.

"To me this trophy belongs to these players," Belichick said. "They met all corners this year, a very challenging year. We're thrilled to win. These players played great all year, their best in the games, and they deserve it, they really deserve it."

"He's got so much foresight and insight, where he always puts the coaching staff and the players and the whole organization in a position to be successful."

Charlie Weiss
New England assistant

Belichick also won two rings as Bill Parcells' assistant with the New York Giants, earning him the derisive nicknames of "Little Bill" and "Tuna Helper." Now Belichick has surpassed his mentor — and just about every other coach in NFL history, too.

"We started at the bottom of the mountain like everybody else, and we're thrilled to get to the top," Belichick said. "It was one fight against 31 other teams to try to win this Super Bowl and win that trophy. We're happy that we did it. And I'll leave the comparisons and historical perspectives to everybody else."

Belichick took this time was to devise a game plan to neutralize Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb and keep receiver Terrell Owens from breaking open the game. McNabb didn't break free from the backfield once; Owens caught nine passes for 122 yards but wasn't able to reach the end zone.

Belichick flunked out of his first head coaching job with the Cleveland Browns when the team fell apart after it was announced at midseason that it was moving to Baltimore. Patriots owner Robert Kraft liked Belichick enough after the 1999 season to give the New York Jets a package of draft picks that included a first-round choice for the coach.

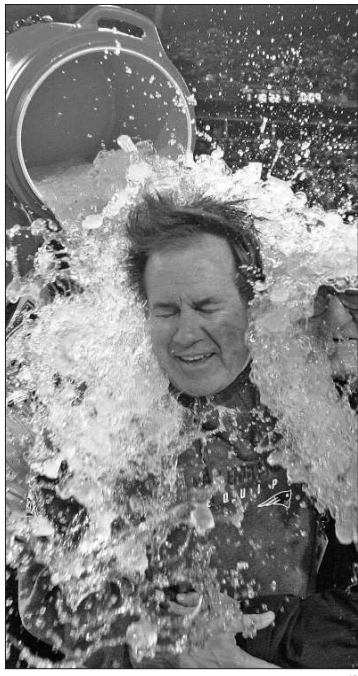
"One of the reasons I hired him, he was understated, he is humble," Kraft said. "He passed his humility on to the team, and that allows us to establish a sense of team. The work ethic and intellect of our coaching staff is really amazing."

Belichick's task for the offseason is to put together a new staff. Offensive coordinator Charlie Weiss is leaving to take over at Notre Dame and defensive coordinator Romeo Crennel has accepted the top job in Cleveland.

But they left as winners. "He makes our job easier. He is such a good leader and he is so prepared," Weiss said. "He's got so much foresight and insight, where he always puts the coaching staff and the players and the whole organization in a position to be successful."

"I think that winning is the greatest tribute to his personnel. He's a great football coach and he's a hell of a guy on top of that." Belichick even got a chance for the traditional ice water bath he's missed during his last two Super Bowl victories because those games weren't decided until the final seconds.

"I hadn't had water dumped on me in a long time, but it felt good," he said. "Whenever they dump water on you, that's a good sign. It's when they throw stuff at you."



New England coach Bill Belichick is doused by his players after the Patriots beat the Philadelphia Eagles 24-21 in Sunday's Super Bowl. It was New England's third NFL title in four seasons under Belichick.

Brady, as always, a cool customer in Super Bowl

BY DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Never mind who was the MVP of this Super Bowl.

Forget about the unlikely return of Terrell Owens, the catch of Corey Dillon celebrating a championship or a New England defense that kept Donovan McNabb on the run, but never let him get very far.

This game ultimately was settled by the quarterbacks, and Tom Brady was super again.

"I felt I was very prepared tonight, more so than ever before," Brady said. "I wish we had gotten things going a little quicker, but I know we're looking in the right places."

He found David Givens in the corner of the end zone late in the first half, a risky play that paid off for no other reason than the ball was in Brady's magical hands.

He led the Patriots on a 69-yard touchdown drive to start the second half, setting the tone for a final 30 minutes that sent New England to a 24-21 victory and its third championship in four years.

Most importantly, he made only one mistake, losing a fumble after an 82-yard drive that didn't result in points, but kept the Philadelphia defense guessing the rest of the game.

McNabb could only wish he turned in such a performance.

The Eagles' quarterback acquitted himself well in his first Super Bowl, completed 30 of 51 passes for 357 yards and three touchdowns, including a 30-yard shot to Greg Lewis in the back of the end zone that kept Philadelphia's hopes alive to the last minute.

But that's not what he will take away from this game.

"I don't look at the touchdowns. I don't look at any of that," McNabb said. "I look at the three interceptions. As the quarterback, you want to make sure you take care of the ball. Turnovers kill you. And they hurt us today."

If there was a moment that defined the Brady mystique, it came late in the first half, on a play that easily could have put the Patriots in a 14-0 hole at intermission.

On second-and-goal from the 4, Brady dropped back and looked to his right, then threw over the middle. With the Eagles' pass rush closing in, he saw Givens standing on the right side of the end zone. Cornerback Lito Sheppard relaxed slightly, perhaps not believing anyone would dare try such a pass.

That was all the hesitation Brady needed.

He slung the pass sideways, some 20 yards across the field, and it arrived just before Sheppard did.

"Tom threw it right where he had to throw it," Givens said.

"I looked up and it hit me exactly where I wanted it. Tom placed the ball right on the money."

It had to be. Anything less, and Sheppard had an easy interception — and 100 yards of grass ahead of him.

That touchdown to Givens, that was about it. His third read on the play down there, New England coach Bill Belichick said. "That was an outstanding play, because he just read his progression all the way out and made a great read and a throw to Givens."

That touchdown with 1:10 left in the half forced a 7-7 tie.

Equally impressive, but not nearly as picturesque, was the Patriots' next drive.

The Patriots needed to set the tone for the first half. They had struggled against the Eagles' defense to start the game, picking up only one first down on their first four possessions.

The nine-play, 69-yard drive began with a safe, simple route to Deion Branch, the Super Bowl MVP, for 8 yards.

Then came three more good throws to Branch on third-and-10. The drive ended with a great read, and another great throw, to linebacker Mike Vrabel, who had lined up as a tight end and fought through a

hold by defensive end Jevon Kearse to make a juggling catch.

"Tom played an outstanding game," Belichick said. "He hit some big passes, especially those third downs at the start of the second half. That was the key to moving the ball."

Brady joins Terry Bradshaw, Joe Montana and Troy Aikman among quarterbacks with at least three NFL titles; Bradshaw and Montana won four.

McNabb will want another chance to atone for this performance.

The only time he ran was when a screen pass failed, and McNabb was tripped up for a loss of a yard. He got away with a bad interception in the end zone — it was nullified by illegal contact on the Patriots — but threw another ball up for grabs that Rodney Harrison intercepted moments later in the first quarter.

Brady's only mistake was bumping into Kevin Faulk's hip on a play-action fake on second-and-goal from the 5. The ball hit the ground, and Brady couldn't secure it before the Eagles pried it loose in the pile.

Still, Brady was flawless when he had to be. Just like always in the Super Bowl is on the line.

MVP Branch steals the show from T.O.

BY BARRY WILNER

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The somewhat unheralded group of New England receivers now has a Super Bowl MVP among its ranks.

While Tom Brady, Corey Dillon, Bill Belichick and nearly every Patriots defender has basked in the spotlight during the team's dynastic run, the wideouts haven't gotten much attention. On Sunday night, though, there was no ignoring Deion Branch in the Patriots' 24-21 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles.

Branch tied a Super Bowl record with 11 catches, gaining 133 yards and making a half-dozen big plays. No longer is Troy Brown the most recognizable New England pass-catcher — and Brown got most of his headlines for also playing defense.

"He's our biggest, strongest receiver. He does all the dirty work," Brown said. "He leveled a guy on one of runs down the sideline. He doesn't get enough credit. He's a big-time playmaker. Our whole group of receivers doesn't get the credit they deserve."

That's partly because the receivers are so interchangeable. If Branch isn't having a big game, maybe Brown is. Or David Givens. Or David Patten. Or Bethel Johnson. Or one of the tight ends.

But Super Sunday was Branch's star turn. Terrell Owens' return to the Eagles' lineup after nearly seven weeks on the sideline with an ankle injury drew the most attention in pregame buildup. And Owens certainly did his part with nine receptions

for 122 yards.

Still, Branch walked off with a third championship ring and the Pete Rozelle Trophy that Brady took home in the Patriots' last two Super Bowl wins.

"They say big players step up in big games," Branch said.

"All the hoopla was about T.O. He's a great player. He really sucked it up to tonight. But I want to show I have the same type of talent as those guys."

Not that anyone with the Patriots doubted the third-year pro could be so dominant.

A second-round pick out of Louisville in 2002, he caught 43 passes his rookie year. He improved to 57 the following year, but missed seven games this season because of a knee injury. He finished with just 35 catches for 454 yards and four TDs.

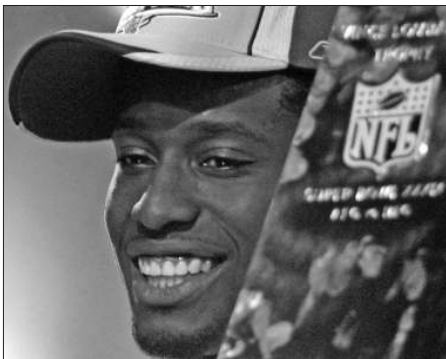
Branch was so frustrated during the recovery process that he didn't travel to every road game.

"My teammates kept pushing me to get better," he said. "They were telling me, 'We're going to need you soon.' I'm just thankful they didn't put me on IR," knowing injured reserve would have ended his season.

Branch found plenty of free space against the NFL's best secondary. It didn't matter who was covering him or what defense the Eagles were playing.

He played a role in all four scoring drives. The biggest catch might have been the last one — a leaping 19-yarder over the middle that set up Adam Vinatieri's 22-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter.

"They did a good job of getting him in



Patriots receiver Deion Branch smiles while holding the Vince Lombardi Trophy on Sunday night. Branch tied the record for receptions in a Super Bowl with 11.

the open zone," All-Pro safety Brian Dawkins said.

In all, eight of his catches for 106 yards came on New England's scoring drives. And his 11 receptions tied Jerry Rice and Cincinnati's Dan Ross for catches in a Super Bowl.

Branch has developed into one of Brady's favorite receivers, usually getting the first look when a blitz is coming or a big catch is needed.

In last year's Super Bowl, Branch had 10 catches and a touchdown in a 32-29 victory over Carolina. Now, he has helped the Patriots become just the second team to win

three Super Bowls in four years.

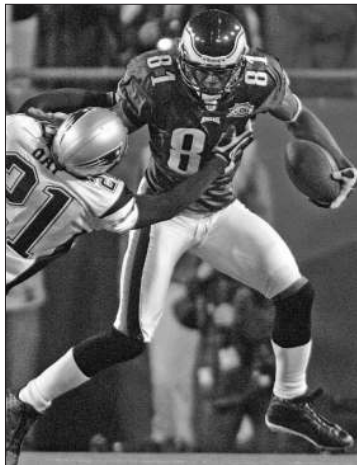
"He's a very dynamic player," Brady said. "He can do it all — getting open, doing great things after he caught the ball."

The type of things Owens does.

Philadelphia's All-Pro receiver defied his doctor by playing just 6 1/2 weeks after surgery. With a metal plate and two screws in his right ankle, Owens was outstanding.

But Branch was better. "I think Deion kind of put the Patriots receivers on the map a little more with tonight's game," Givens said. "He got us maybe a little more respect than we probably needed that we didn't have."

Owens delivers strong a game on a weak ankle



Eagles wide receiver Terrell Owens tries to push his way past Patriots cornerback Randall Gay (21) after a reception in the first quarter.

BY ROB MAADDI

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Terrell Owens has to save his Super Bowl dance.

The Eagles' All-Pro receiver caught nine passes for 122 yards but didn't score a touchdown, and Philadelphia lost 24-21 to the New England Patriots on Sunday night.

Owens defied his doctor's advice and was in the starting lineup just six weeks after ankle surgery. He made several outstanding catches, and proved right away he was no decoy.

"I knew I was going to play all along," Owens said.

Owens caught a 7-yard pass on Philadelphia's second play — his first action since he severely sprained his ankle and broke his leg in a game against Dallas on Dec. 19.

He had a 30-yard catch-and-run later in the first quarter, setting up a first down at the Patriots 8, which the Eagles failed to turn into points. After the catch, the flamboyant Owens flapped his arms along the sideline. He also had a 36-yard reception in the fourth quarter.

"For him to come back and play the way he played, I've got a lot of respect for him," Patriots linebacker Mike Vrabel said.

Owens was the target on McNabb's incomplete pass that start-

ed the game, and he hauled in a 9-yard reception on the second possession.

He appeared to have no trouble running his patterns, gaining several yards after his catches. Owens seemed out of breath early on when he went to the sideline, but didn't have to sit out plays.

"In this situation, other people like Brett Favre, they would have called him a warrior," Owens said. "For me, they said I was selfish. If I'm selfish, I'm selfish because I want to help my team win."

Owens didn't have any receptions in the second quarter as McNabb spread the ball around and had better success moving the offense, but had two catches during Philadelphia's game-tying drive in the third quarter and six total in the second half.

"It's remarkable how he was able to come back and played so well for us," said McNabb, who had three TDs passes and three interceptions.

Two days after the Eagles won the NFC championship game, Dr. Mark Myerson, the surgeon who operated on Owens' right ankle in December, said he wouldn't clear him to play against the Patriots.

But Owens insisted he would be in the lineup — not just standing on the sideline leading cheers as he did in the NFC title game — when Philadelphia earned its first

Super Bowl appearance since 1981.

It was a fitting stage for Owens, the playmaker, showboater, brash-talking perennial Pro Bowl receiver. But he was denied an opportunity to perform one of his innovative touchdown celebrations in front of his largest audience.

In his first season with the Eagles after eight years in San Francisco, Owens led Philadelphia with 77 catches for 1,200 yards and 14 TDs. He invigorated the Eagles with his attitude, enthusiasm and exceptional play, adding a swagger to a team that desperately needed a personality.

Myerson inserted two screws in Owens' ankle and a plate on the outside of the ankle three days after he was injured. Owens was told after surgery that he had only an outside chance of returning for the Super Bowl. But he rehabbed vigorously, hoping to help Philadelphia win its first NFL championship since 1960.

With Owens, the defense was extremely potent, averaging 25.4 points in 14 games. After Owens was injured, the Eagles lost the last two regular-season games — but most of the starters hardly played and others were rested.

The Eagles scored 27 points in each of their two playoff victories without Owens. But they couldn't pull out a win with him in the biggest game of all.

"We'll be back on this stage," Owens said. "We lost to a good team."

Good and game plays key part for Patriots

BY DAVE GOLDBERG

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The stat was glaring for the Philadelphia Eagles: 17 rushes, 45 yards.

The four turnovers hurt, no doubt. As Donovan McNabb said, "We could have been up 14-0."

Ultimately, though, what won New England its third Super Bowl in four seasons Sunday was the Patriots' ability to run the ball while preventing the Eagles from doing the same.

No, it wasn't a blowout, just 24-21, but that was predictable, too — New England's Super Bowl wins in 2002 and 2004 also came by three points.

The Patriots didn't need a last-second field goal by Adam Vinatieri this time around.

It was over when McNabb's desperation pass was picked off by Rodney Harrison with 9 seconds left. But the game turned on a well-balanced 66-yard drive that started late in the third quarter and quarterback Tom Brady took home the award after the Patriots' first two championships.

So New England established itself as the team of the century (early though it is) and put Bill Belichick ahead of even the great Vince Lombardi with a 10-1 postseason record.

Lombardi would have loved it.

Like his Packers of the 1960s, this is such a complete team that there was no clear-cut MVP of the game. It turned out to be Deion Branch, who had 11 receptions for 133 yards. But it could have been Teddy Bruschi, Harrison or Richard Seymour, who all made big defensive plays, or quarterback Tom Brady, who took home the award after the Patriots' first two championships.

"Different plays, different guys," guard Joe Andruzzi said, expressing just what happened for the Patriots in the last four years, and especially the last two.

when they are 34-4, an almost unthinkable record in the parity of free agency and the salary cap.

Lombardi certainly would have loved the drive that gave New England the lead for good early in the fourth quarter. The Patriots ran for 34 yards — including Corey Dillon's 2-yard TD.

New England also got 20 yards rushing on that drive from Dillon's backup, Kevin Faulk, who ran for 8 and 12 yards from a spread formation. Faulk also took a screen pass from the 16 to the 2 to set up Dillon's score.

"Every time I come in, they yell 'screen! screen!'" Faulk said. "So we ran the draw and it worked and then we ran the screen."

New England finished with 112 yards rushing on 28 carries.

The game also demonstrated the other characteristic that has made the Patriots into a dynasty in the days of salary caps and unstable rosters. New England gets big plays from all kinds of players.

As usual, one was Bruschi, setting the tone for the game with a sack on Philadelphia's first possession. Then he made an interception that ended a fourth-quarter drive one play after a 36-yard pass completion to Terrell Owens, who performed better than expected in his first game back after a severe ankle injury.

Harrison had two interceptions, one on his own 3 in the first quarter and the second with 9 seconds remaining.

And when Harrison and Co. weren't stopping McNabb, they were stuffing Brian Westbrook.

Aside from a meaningless 22-yard scamper by Westbrook on the final play of the first half, Philadelphia couldn't run against a defense that had just two down linemen. Outside linebackers — Willie McGinest, Mike Vrabel and Roosevelt Colvin — often played defensive end, making the Patriots' 4-3 defense into a 4-3 that Philadelphia was ill-prepared to attack.

Seymour, who missed five weeks



New England Patriots' Teddy Bruschi celebrates after intercepting a fourth-quarter pass.

with a knee injury, didn't play as much as he usually does. But when he did, he was as disruptive as ever.

Belichick said the 4-3 look was designed to put pressure on McNabb. "I don't think we played 4-3 once all day," the coach said.

But it also worked in shutting down the run.

"They used the linebackers to jam the guards and we never got any good running

lanes," said Westbrook, who carried 15 times for 44 yards.

The Eagles had that to lament and plenty else. But they also recognized they were up against a team unlike any other in the NFL.

"I'm proud of my team," Eagles tight end L.J. Smith said. "We have a great coaching staff and a great organization. They won today but we're still a great team."

Dynasty: Owens' return not enough to help Eagles

DYNASTY, FROM BACK PAGE

Donovan McNabb threw a 30-yard touchdown pass to Greg Lewis with 1:48 remaining, but the Patriots recovered the onside kick and ran off all but the final 46 seconds.

Sure, the NFL-planned celebration is virtually impossible to distinguish from one year to the next, but that doesn't lessen the Patriots' remarkable accomplishment — especially in the era of salary caps and free agency.

"This is the best ever," offensive tackle Matt Light said. "We have more heart than anyone in the world. This is unbelievable. I love this confetti."

The Eagles got a huge lift from Terrell Owens, who defied his doctor to play in his first Super Bowl at 6½ weeks after surgery. T.O. had nine catches for 122 yards. Not bad for a guy who was playing with two screws and a metal plate in his right ankle.

"It's amazing to be able to come out there and do what he did," Harrison said. "You could tell he was still hurting a little bit, but he played tremendous."

But Owens won't be in New England's Dynasty award, who claimed the MVP award

with 11 catches — tying a Super Bowl record — for 133 yards.

"He epitomizes the way the Patriots win," NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue said Monday. "He has great individual talent... but all within the context of the team."

He wasn't a flawless game by any means. McNabb (30-for-51 for 397 yards) threw three interceptions, was sacked four times and had a fumble overturned by replay. Tom Brady touched a handoff with Kevin Faulk, leading to a fumble deep in Philly territory.

For the most part, though, the Patriots followed a familiar routine — run the ball (28 carries, 112 yards), limit mistakes in the passing game (Brady was 23-for-33 for 236 yards, with no interceptions) and rely heavily on their defense (the Eagles managed just 45 yards on the ground).

The loss extended Philly's excruciating championship drought to eight games.

The city's last football title came in 1960. The last time it came came 22 years ago, when the 76ers won the NBA championship.

turnovers — and against such a tough football team you can't do that.

Now, it's time to start sorting out the historical significance of another Patriots' Super Bowl title. They have won nine straight postseason games, equalling Vince Lombardi's Green Bay teams. And coach Bill Belichick improved his playoff record to 10-1, one-upping the great Lombardi.

"As I give you the Lombardi Trophy, I suspect that coach Lombardi would have a deep admiration for how your team played today," Tagliabue told Belichick after the game.

The Patriots had a bumpy road to their latest championship, and in many ways the Super Bowl mirrored those struggles. But, as always, New England found a way to persevere.

Maybe it's their versatility. For the first time in a row, linebacker Mike Vrabel caught a touchdown pass. He's got five interceptions in his career — all TDs.

Even though the Eagles made it to the Super Bowl for the first time since 1961 — after three straight conference championship flops — their sparkling season ended in disappointment before a sea of mostly green jerseys in the crowd of 78,125.

Super Bowl Patriots 24, Eagles 21

At Jacksonville, Fla.
New England 0 7 17-24
Philadelphia 0 7 7-21

Second Quarter
Phi-Smitth 6 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 9:55.

NE—Glover 4 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 11:0.

Third Quarter
NE—Vrabel 2 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 3:25.

Phi—Westbrook 10 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 3:25.

Fourth Quarter
NE—punter 2 run (Vinatieri kick), 13:44.

NE—Vrabel 22 yard, 13:44.
Phi—Glover 30 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 1:48.

A-78:125.

NE Phi
First downs 21 24

Total Net Yards 311 369

Rushes yards 216 1745

Passing 210 324

Punt Returns 4-26 17-49

Kickoff Returns 4-48 5-114

Interceptions Ret. 3-0 0-0

Comp-Air-Yds 23-37 30-51-3

Sacked-Yards Lost 2-17 4-33

Punts 7-50 5-32

Fumbles-Lost 1-1 2-1

Penalties-Yards 11-37 28-23

Time of Possession 31:37 28:23

Rushing—New England, Branch 15-75, Faulk 8-28, Dillon 3-16, Brady 1-1-minus 13.

Philadelphia, Westbrook 15-44, Levens 1-1-McNabb 1-0.

Passing—New England, Brady 23-37-397.

Philadelphia, McNabb 30-51-3.

Receiving—New England, Branch 11-23, Dillon 3-16, Glover 3-28, Faulk 2-27, T. Brown 2-17, Graham 1-7, Vrabel 1-2.

Philadelphia, Owens 2-22, Westbrook 7-60, Finkinst 4-82, Levens 4-53, Smith 4-27, Mitchell 1-11, Pary 1-2.

"He grabbed me and Romeo at the end of the game and said, 'Hey, it's over,'" Weiss said.

What a ride it's been. One for the ages.

Illinois' quick start finishes Indiana

The Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Deron Williams couldn't get one shot to fall. A lot of his passes, though, were right on target.

Williams had assists on Illinois' first seven baskets and finished with 11 as the top-ranked Illini remained unbeaten with a 60-47 victory over Indiana on Sunday. It was the lowest-scoring game of the season for Illinois (23-0, 9-0 Big Ten), which held the Hoosiers to their second-lowest output of the season.

"We got a 'W.' That's all I care about," said Williams, who was 0-for-7 from the field.

His only point was a free throw with 2:15 remaining.

"I just didn't shoot the ball well. I still got my teammates involved. That's what I try to do."

James Augustine scored 16 points and Luther Head 13 for the Illini, who should remain the unanimous No. 1 in The Associated Press' college basketball poll for a second straight week. Dee Brown added 12 points and Roger Powell Jr. had 10.

The Illini led a 20-3 run to start the game

**Men's
Top 25
roundup**

evaporate as the Hoosiers outscored them 17-6 over the final 8:15 of the first half to trail 26-20.

"It was probably the worst thing to happen," Illini coach Bruce Weber said of the big early lead.

Head got into foul trouble and some spot play from reserves caused the Illini to struggle against Indiana's zone defense.

"We weren't sharp, that's for sure," Weber said. "You're not going to play perfect all the time. You wish you could but we didn't."

Illinois and No. 5 Boston College (20-0) are the only unbeaten teams remaining in Division I.

The Hoosiers played without leading scorer Bryce Wright, out with an injured left ankle.

Coach Mike Davis started four freshmen against the Illini.

"What better growing-up pill to give them than to play them on the road against the No. 1 team in the country in an environment like this," Davis said.

Robert Vaden and D.J. White, both freshmen, each scored 12 points for the Hoosiers, who shot 38 percent from the field.

Indiana missed eight of its first nine shots before White's three-point play triggered an 8-2 run that brought the Hoosiers within 22-11.

"We didn't come out as sharp as we'd like to," Strickland said. "But I think we stepped back nicely. I think our defense just settled up. We started to settle in."

But Illinois went on a 13-2 run to begin the second half. Brown had two three-pointers and Head added one from long range during the run that put the Illini up 39-22 with 15:33 to go. Indiana trailed by double figures thereafter.

No. 2 North Carolina 81, Florida St. 60:

Rashad McCants had 16 points for the Tar Heels (19-2, 8-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), who blew the game open with a 25-6 run in the second half. Raymond Felton had 14 points for North Carolina, which had just nine turnovers for the second straight game.

No. 10 Wake Forest had 14 points for the Seminoles (11-11, 3-6), who rallied from an



Illinois' James Augustine dunks on a break-away during the first half against Indiana.

18-point first-half deficit to get within 49-48 before the visiting Tar Heels went on their big run. Florida State overcame a 24-point deficit last time to beat North Carolina in overtime.

Navy gets revenge, routs Army

The Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Taj Mathews scored a career-high 26 points Sunday to lead Navy to an 84-69 victory over Army.

Mathews was 6-for-14 on three-pointers in his final Army-Navy game, leading five Middies in double figures. Mathews also added a career-high eight rebounds.

Greg Sprink added 14 points, including four three-pointers, and 10 rebounds for Navy, which made a season-best 13 threes in a season-high 34 attempts.

Matt Fannin and Corey Johnson added 12 points each and George O'Garra scored 11 for Navy (7-15, 3-6 Patriot League).

Navy avenged a 63-43 loss at Army on Jan. 23 and prevented an Army sweep of the series for the first time since 1992.

Navy held a big rebounding advantage over the Knights (47-29) and made 23 free throws to Army's 12.

Army (3-18, 1-8) was led by Grant Carter's 21 points, all on three-pointers. Matt Bell added 16 points and Colin Harris 12.

The teams tied a combined 57 three-pointers. Navy's 13 three-pointers were the second-most in school history.

Navy jumped to a 12-1 lead as Army missed its first seven shots and didn't score a basket over the first six minutes.

The Middies ran the lead to 34-19 before Army went on a 13-0 run to end the half. Navy didn't score over the final 4:22 of the half, missing its final six shots.

The teams went tied 37-37 with 18:38 to play when Navy went on a 14-2 run to build a 51-39 advantage with 14:10 to play. Army again rallied, closing to 71-67 with 3:50 to play as Carter hit three three-pointers, but Navy had too much down the stretch.

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SPORTS



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Team for the ages

Dynasty talk builds with Pats' third Super title

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The whole thing must have seemed routine to the New England Patriots: confetti fluttering across the field, fireworks brightening the night sky, a carefully choreographed championship trophy presentation.

Downright ordinary, right? Hardly.

The Patriots became a full-fledged dynasty with their third Super Bowl victory in four years, beating the Philadelphia Eagles 24-21 Sunday night.

New England claimed a spot alongside the Green Bay Packers of the 1960s, the Pittsburgh Steelers of the '70s, the San Francisco 49ers of the '80s, the Dallas Cowboys of the '90s.

A team for the decade. A team for the ages.

"We're champions now. That's it," safety Rodney Harrison said. "I don't know about dynasty."

Trust us, Rodney, this group fits the definition in every respect. New England becomes just the seventh franchise to claim back-to-back titles. The Cowboys are the only other team to win the championship three times over a four-year period.

Typically, the Patriots didn't leave themselves much room. All three of their Super Bowls have been decided by three points — the previous two on last-second field goals by Adam Vinatieri. By comparison, only two of the first 33 Super Bowls were within field goal range at the end.

But what they lack in style, the Patriots more than make up with their steely determination to do whatever it takes to win. When the Eagles jumped to a 7-0 lead, New England responded with a touchdown of its own late in the first half.

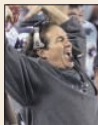
When Philadelphia tied the game at 14 late in the third quarter, the Patriots marched right down the field for Corey Dillon's 2-yard touchdown. And, in a fitting bit of synergy, Vinatieri booted a 22-yard field goal with 8:40 remaining that provided the margin of victory.



Inside:

■ Brady nearly flawless in leading team to third title in four years, Page 27

■ Dillon caps image repairing season with championship, Page 26



■ Belichick, like team, puts his name among legends, Page 27

■ Patriots receiver Terrell Owens' return to claim MVP award, Page 28



KRT PHOTOS

Above: Super Bowl MVP Deion Branch of the New England Patriots holds the Lombardi Trophy with head coach Bill Belichick after a victory over Philadelphia Sunday in Jacksonville, Fla. Left: Philadelphia receiver Terrell Owens walks off the field after his team's loss. Owens, who is recovering from an ankle injury and played against his doctor's wishes, finished with nine catches for 122 yards.

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